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Thackeray's letters to an American family

William Makepeace Thackeray, Lucy W. Baxter

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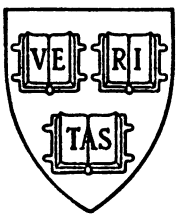

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FROM

Mrs. Edward Churchill

.....

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THACKERAY'S LETTERS
TO
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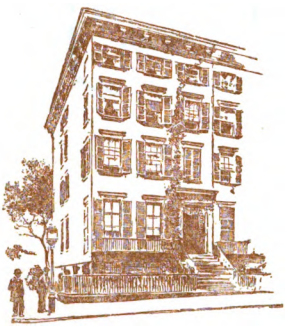
THACKERAY'S LETTERS

TO AN AMERICAN FAMILY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
LUCY W. BAXTER
AND ORIGINAL DRAWINGS
BY THACKERAY



THE BROWN HOUSE

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1904

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THACKERAY'S LETTERS
TO
AN AMERICAN FAMILY

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INTRODUCTION

IN the early days of November, 1852, my father, to his own great surprise, found himself shaking hands with the great English novelist in the parlors of the Clarendon Hotel, New York. The reading public had been much interested and excited by the news that Thackeray was coming to America to deliver a course of lectures on the English humorists. We had talked of it eagerly at home, having but lately read "Esmond," and having discussed in a lively fashion, as was usual in our family circle, the merits and demerits of Lady Castlewood, Beatrix, and the young Harry. We had made plans for securing seats for the lectures, which were to be given under the auspices of the Mercantile Library Association, whose president at that time was Mr. Willard Felt. We had no idea of having any familiar intercourse with the famous author of "Vanity Fair." Indeed, we should have been almost alarmed at so ambitious a suggestion.

But a young Englishman and friend of Thackeray, Mr. B—— M——, of whom we had seen

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much during the preceding year, seeing the announcement of Thackeray's arrival, urged my father to go with him to the Clarendon, and be presented to the famous author. To this my father strongly objected, saying, what was very true, that neither as a literary man nor otherwise had he claims on Mr. Thackeray's attention. Mr. B—— M——, however, was not to be denied, and thus, in this casual and unexpected manner, was begun a friendship which lasted, in spite of absence and separation, until the Christmas eve of 1863, when the great, kind heart was wholly stilled.

Mr. Thackeray gave us, too, a claim to the warm interest of his mother and daughters. We had kind letters from Mrs. Carmichael Smythe, thanking us for receiving her son into our home circle; and with the daughters the bond was closer still. The youngest, Mrs. Leslie Stephen, and her husband, came to us, very naturally, when they were in America in 1868, making us feel that they counted us as old friends, although we were meeting for the first time. Mrs. Ritchie is indeed a friend; and when, in 1892,

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I was in London, she gave me the truest welcome to her house at Wimbledon, and made me very happy by showing me that the recollection of her father's old affection for us was strong with her still.

The entire simplicity and frankness of my father's accost, added to the warm expressions of interest from our English friend, seemed to attract Mr. Thackeray, and from the first visit to the "Brown House," as he later always called it, he evidently felt at home among us. No doubt he was very homesick when he first reached America, everything was so new and strange, and he had left, almost for the first time, the mother and daughters, so fondly loved, as his letters testify. He came to us whenever he could, with perfect freedom and informality. He begged to dine with us before the lectures, which even at first bored him greatly, and in the end became a real burden. The monotony of saying the same things over and over again, and the constraint of being obliged to be ready at a given time, whether he felt in a talking mood or not, were very trying to him. He became greatly

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attached to my mother, whose quiet sympathy soothed him, and his place at her right hand, with the claret-pitcher ready for him, was an established arrangement before a lecture. He would sometimes stop in the midst of the desultory conversation then in progress, and roll out in a deep voice, with an exaggerated accent, the opening sentences of the lecture next to be delivered, making us all laugh at his comic distaste for the performance. He did not like the lecture platform, and had it not been for the abundant shower of "American dollars," assuring the future of the much-loved daughters, he would doubtless have refused many of the invitations which came to him from all parts of the country. Indeed, his letters will show that he was often sorely tempted to throw up his engagements and run off to England by the next steamer.

He entered with great interest into all our plans and amusements, and on one occasion, when my eldest brother's costume for a juvenile fancy ball was under discussion, he took pen and paper as he sat chatting among us, and drew little

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Time of William III

Time of Mary Q of Scots

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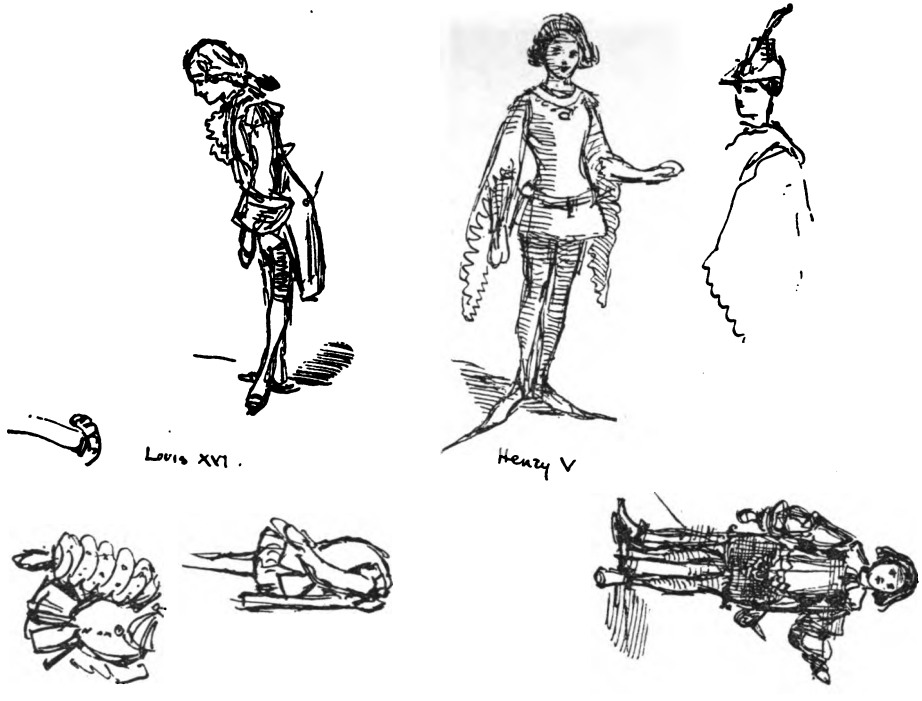

THACKERAY'S SKETCHES OF PAGES OF VARIOUS PERIODS, FOR A FANCY-BALL COSTUME

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sketches of the proper dress for a page of various periods, being well versed in all the details belonging to each costume. He said that the quaint little figure with the big cuffs and broad brim to his hat was like little melancholy Harry Esmond when the kind Lady Castlewood first saw him and smiled so sweetly in his grave face. When my brother, on the night of the ball, came down to display himself to the family circle, Mr. Thackeray was present. After the boy went away Mr. Thackeray said to my mother:

"Well, that was most characteristic of Wylly."

"In what way?" asked my mother.

"Why, did you not notice? Wylly never once looked at *himself* in the mirror, but only at the dress, to see that it was quite correct."

This showed his quick appreciation of character and observation, for my brother was always entirely without vanity or self-consciousness.

After dinner Mr. Thackeray often sat chatting while my sister was dressing for a ball to which he himself might be going. It was on one of these occasions that, turning over the leaves

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of "Pendennis" as it lay on the table beside him, he said, smiling, from time to time:

"Yes, it is very like—it is certainly very like."

"Like whom, Mr. Thackeray?" said my mother.

"Oh, like me, to be sure; Pendennis is very like me."

"Surely not," objected my mother, "for Pendennis was so weak!"

"Ah, well, Mrs. Baxter," he said, with a shrug of his great shoulders and a comical look, "your humble servant is not very strong."

An American ball-room amused him greatly. The bright, gay talk, the lively girls full of enjoyment, which they did not fear to show, made a contrast to the more conventional entertainments of London. My sister was at that time going much into society—she was not yet twenty and had both wit and beauty. In his picture of Ethel Newcome, as she holds a little court about her at one of the great London balls, Thackeray reproduces some impressions made by the New York girl. Some of Ethel's impatience for the disallusions of society, its spiteful comment and

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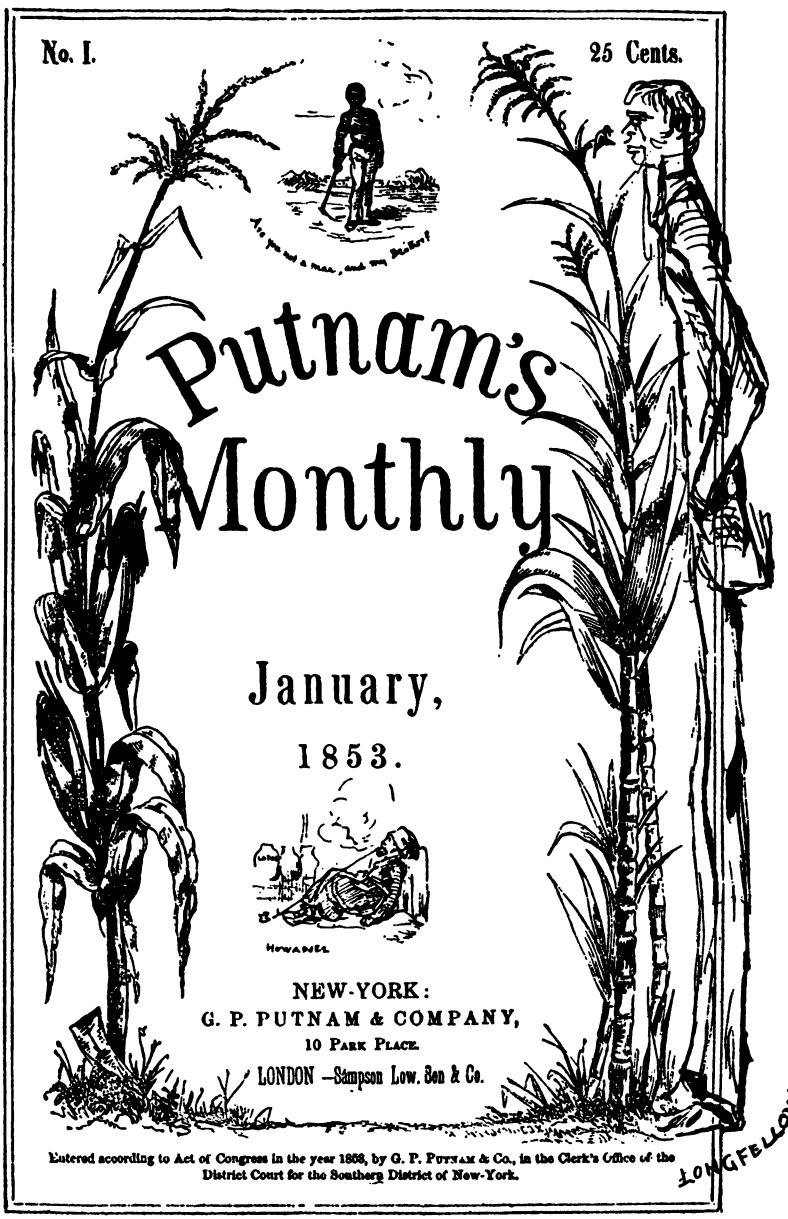

CARICATURES BY THACKERAY OF LONGFELLOW, GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS AND "UNCLE TOM"

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harsh criticism, might well be reflections from discussions with my sister in the Brown House library, where Mr. Thackeray passed many an hour talking of matters grave and gay.

With December came the course of lectures in Boston, and his first letters told us of the people he met there. One, no doubt, was Longfellow, whose tall figure, whistling charming notes to a fascinated little bird, he sketched on the cover of "Putnam's Magazine." This magazine was sent by my mother to Mr. Longfellow a short time before his death, and after the end came Miss Longfellow returned it. She wrote that it had much amused and gratified her father, and that the book had been lying on his table up to the last moment. Naturally it now has an added value.

Another pen-and-ink drawing on the cover refers to Mr. George William Curtis, whom Mr. Thackeray, after reading his "Nile Notes," always called the Howadje. He is drawn lying among cushions, with an Oriental dress and pipe. Above is a little vignette which refers to an article in the magazine, "Uncle Tomitudes." In one of

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his letters Mr. Thackeray speaks of meeting Mrs. Stowe and being pleasantly impressed by her looks and manner.

When the return from Boston was at hand, my mother suggested to the younger members of the family that, should Mr. Thackeray appear during the day at Brown House, it were best not to ask him to dine.

"I have not just such a dinner as I like to give him," she said.

Whatever was the deficiency, my mother had to overlook it, as the sequel proved. As she stood in the dining-room just before the dinner-hour, giving some orders to the maid, a summons came from the front door. After it was opened, steps were heard coming steadily through the hall to the dining-room. As my mother turned in surprise to see who could be coming at so late an hour, there in the doorway stood the tall figure with kind eyes and silvery hair which had become so familiar to us.

"Oh, Mrs. Baxter," he said, "let me show you what capital copies Crowe has made of the Boston pictures."

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In each hand he held an unframed oil sketch of Gilbert Stuart's portraits of General and Mrs. Washington, then, as now, in the Boston Museum of Art. Mr. Eyre Crowe was Mr. Thackeray's private secretary, and had a good deal of artistic ability. The pictures were placed on chairs, examined and admired. Mr. Thackeray was greatly pleased, especially with the portrait of Washington.

"Look at him," he said. "Does he not look as if he had just said a good, stupid thing?"

Then, turning to my mother, he said:

"Now you will give me some dinner, won't you?"

The younger people were greatly delighted by my mother's discomfiture. I doubt if Mr. Thackeray discovered anything amiss in the dinner. He always laughed at our American idea of making a "feast" for a guest, saying that we did not understand at all "just to fetch a friend home to a leg of mutton."

No one must think, from the remark just quoted, that Mr. Thackeray undervalued Washington, or wished to hold him up to ridicule. On

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the contrary, in later years letters show how grieved and hurt he was by the misconception in America as to a passage in "The Virginians" which roused the indignation of our thin-skinned people. He fully appreciated Washington's great qualities, often spoke warmly of him, but he did not consider him brilliant in conversation. An impartial examination of the portrait in question would possibly prove the remark to be not an unjust one.

With the New Year Mr. Thackeray started to fulfil his Southern engagements, and his letters brought us little sketches of the negroes, whose ways and sayings amused him greatly. From Washington he wrote to beg my father, mother, and sister to join him for a few days; but an unfortunate accident at the gymnasium, which made me an invalid for a number of weeks, prevented the accomplishment of such a plan. One of his most charming letters was sent to me after the accident. Before going to Charleston, he ran back to New York to give a lecture for the benefit of the Sewing Society of the Unitarian church, in which the mother of Mr. Felt

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was much interested. He wrote an introduction, in the course of which he repeated Hood's poem, "The Bridge of Sighs." No one who heard him would easily forget the pathos of his voice in the verse:

"*Take her up tenderly,*
Lift her with care!
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!"

No more tender appreciation of distress could be found than that which always responded in the great author (cynic as he has been called) to any tale of trouble or want. His purse was constantly at the service of his friends, or often mere acquaintances, much to his own pecuniary detriment, and his glasses were dimmed when he spoke of the sorrows which day after day came to his knowledge. His liberality to those who served him was unfailing.

After his return from the South, Mr. Thackeray found there was to be a little celebration of my seventeenth birthday. There was to be music, dancing, and flowers, for what was called in those days a "small party." Mr. Thackeray

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made the occasion memorable by the verses he sent with some flowers. With them came also the quaint little rhymed note, striking a lighter key. The verses have always been very precious to me, but the first form (which will be found in facsimile on pages 59 and 60) I think more attractive than the shorter lines used in the published poem. The month of May carried Mr. Thackeray back to England, and he was not again in America until 1855.

The second course of lectures, on "The Four Georges," was not, I think, as well received in America as that on "The English Humorists." He speaks of this in one of his later letters, when he mentions that the lectures were much more popular in England than in "the States." We had hoped that on his second visit to America Mr. Thackeray would bring his daughters to be our guests, but it was decided that they must remain with their grandmother, Mrs. Carmichael Smythe. At his request, we met Mr. Thackeray in Boston on his second arrival, and remained with him a few days before he went to fulfil an engagement in Buffalo. My sister was to be mar-

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ried in a short time, and we had an autumn full of busy days for my mother, complicated with much illness in the Brown House. After Buffalo came his second course of lectures in New York, and later he returned to Boston. We saw him but seldom during this last visit, compared with the earlier one. There were changes in the circle of the Brown House. My sister had, as he said, "slipped away smiling, on her husband's arm," and the gap thus made could not be filled. In February we met in Charleston, where I had gone to be with my sister and brother-in-law, and he writes most kindly to my mother of us there. One experience of what was another side of Mr. Thackeray's temper came to me in Charleston. Up to this time we had never seen anything of the roughness sometimes attributed to him when he was annoyed.

At a certain dinner-party where I went alone with him, my sister not being well, a lady was present who from their first meeting had antagonized Mr. Thackeray. She was clever and rather brilliant, but had written some very trashy novels, whose reputation had certainly not extended

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beyond her native city. On this and other occasions she seemed determined to attract Mr. Thackeray's attention, to his great annoyance. At last when something was said about the tribulations of authors, the lady leaned across the table, saying in a loud voice, "You and I, Mr. Thackeray, *being in the same boat*, can understand, can we not?" A dead silence fell, a thunder-cloud descended upon the face of Mr. Thackeray, and the pleasure of the entertainment was at an end. The hostess was no doubt grateful when the novelist had to excuse himself for the lecture and take his departure. Certainly one of the guests was, for the first time in her experience, relieved to see the door close upon her kind friend. This annoyance on the part of the lady was the culmination of numerous attacks, and struck just the wrong chord. She is referred to as the "Individual" in a letter to my mother.

In all *our* intercourse with Mr. Thackeray we saw only the kind, sympathetic, loving side of his great nature. It was always impossible for us to feel afraid of his cynicism, his sharp criticism, of which others speak. He could not help

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seeing the weakness of human nature, but he did the fullest justice—as he would say, he "took off his hat"—to whatever was fine or noble in man or woman. He was, too, very patient with weakness of character, but he hated and despised pretense and humbug. All this has been said before, but I feel I must add my confirmation of such a view of his character from our personal experience.

In May, as will be seen from his letters, Mr. Thackeray took a sudden resolution and went off, without warning, to England. It was a real distress to my mother, as to all of us, that he should go thus, without a word of good-by; but that was just what he wanted to avoid. We never saw him again, but letters came from time to time, telling of himself, his daughters, "a little tourkin in Switzerland" for *their* benefit, the fine house he was building at Kensington, "the reddest house in the town," as he said we should find it if we came to London. Later he wrote of his stepfather's death—the original of Colonel Newcome—and of his mother's grief. In the last years he wrote in full and affectionate

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sympathy with our great anxiety and sorrow. These letters speak also, alas! of increasing attacks of illness, and we felt that the hope that he had long cherished of writing the history of Queen Anne in the new house at Kensington was not likely to be realized. Still the shock caused by his death was very great. It brought sorrow to many hearts, but I think to none more acutely than to those so truly loving him in the Brown House.

LUCY W. BAXTER

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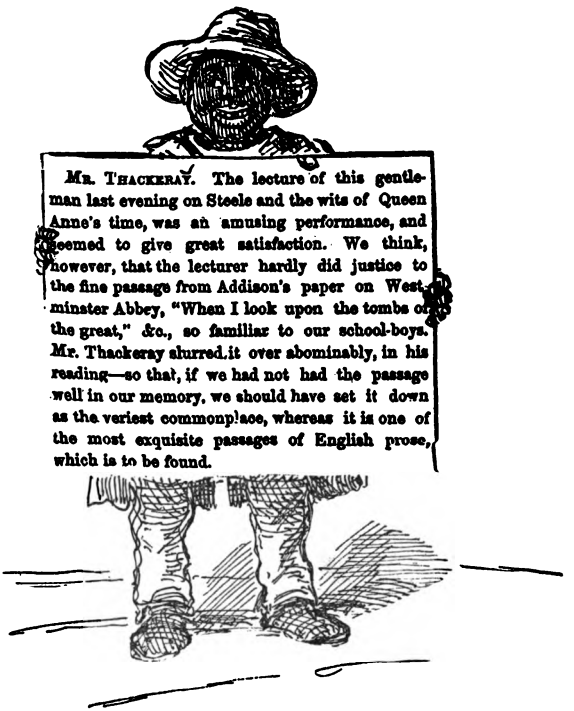
FACSIMILE OF A LETTER TO MRS. BAXTER POSTMARKED BOSTON, DECEMBER 30, 1852



MR. THACKERAY. The lecture of this gentleman last evening on Steele and the wits of Queen Anne's time, was an amusing performance, and seemed to give great satisfaction. We think, however, that the lecturer hardly did justice to the fine passage from Addison's paper on Westminster Abbey, "When I look upon the tombs of the great," &c., so familiar to our school-boys. Mr. Thackeray slurred it over abominably, in his reading—so that, if we had not had the passage well in our memory, we should have set it down as the veriest commonplace, whereas it is one of the most exquisite passages of English prose, which is to be found.

My dear Mrs. Baxter. Mr. Secretary Crowe will be in N. Y. tomorrow eve? on his way to Philadelphia on a special mission. I should think he will call in Second Avenue. I wish I were he. If Mr. Baxter knows any one at Phila. likely to further their scheme (Lecturing of course) will you give him a letter. I mean to go on writing constantly myself? I send my best Cupid to the young ladies & am

Yours always truly.

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LETTERS
TO AN AMERICAN FAMILY

I

Tremont, [*Mass.*] *Tuesday* [1852]

Lots of dollars (1500 already) for the lectures.

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER &——: This is not the letter at all. This is only to say that I 'm going to write a letter tomorrow. I have begun one (I have had ceaseless visitors ever since this morning at 10), but I want to say God bless you! God bless you! and can hardly see the paper for—for something in my eyes which brings a film over them as I think of you and your great goodness to me. You must let me write to you often and often, won't you? And do the same to me, please. Now will you, and *You* write tomorrow? Poor B.! I feel for him now.

II

Boston, Dec. 22, 1852
Wednesday

I HAVE put the two letters in the fire which I wrote yesterday—two very fine, long, fond sentimental letters. They were too long and sen-

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timental and fond. A pen that's so practised as mine is, runs on talking and talking; I fancy the people I speak to are sitting with me, and pour out the sense and nonsense, jokes and the contrary, egotisms—whatever comes uppermost. And you know what was uppermost yesterday. My heart was longing and yearning after you, full of love and gratitude for your welcome of me—but the words grew a little too warm. You wouldn't like me to write letters in that strain. You might like me to write no more; and if you did, I should burst out into a misanthropical rage again. Please to let me write on.

Enter Dr. O. W. Holmes half an hour—a dear little fellow, a true poet. I told him how much I liked his verses, and what do you think he did? *His* eyes began to water. Well, it's a comfort to have given pleasure to that kind soul. . . .

And now Interruption No 3, . . . and that is, 1, 2, 3 letters from home that have been lying here ever so long. . . . I send you one of Anny's. . . . That's a pretty picture of the grand old mother and her old husband, such a fine gentleman

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and lady, so handsome—I 've never seen any one so handsome, Mademoiselle; no, NEVER. . . . I suppose you know that the two hand-writings are by the same hand; and hope you dont think it is Mr. Crowe the Secretary writing.

I wonder whether, if any body were to say, "Come, Friend, and pass Christmas Day with us,—you can be here to dinner, you can pass Sunday here and a part of Monday,"—I wonder whether I would come. New Year's day is not so pleasant. There are visitors all that time, and all those visitors would be saying, "there 's that old Mr. Thackeray here again." May I come? You kind dear Mrs. Baxter, your first impression will be yes. Your second very likely no. Think over for half an hour which way it shall be, and whether you will have me gladden my eyes by seeing your faces again. Why it's only a few hours from here to the Second Avenue; and I whisk off the car at 27th Street, and leave my bag at the Clarendon, and am down 18th St. in no time. Say if you "approve and honour the proposal."

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III

Dec., 1852

Thursday Ev'g

HERE is something that I must send to a young lady by Mr. Crowe because I think it will please her, and with it I send the very kind-

THE CLARENDON HOTEL
THACKERAY'S HOME IN NEW YORK CITY

est wishes to the very kindest family that I have met many a long day—and I hope you young ladies were not offended by that parting benediction the other day—could n't help myself. I

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was n't in the least aware of it, and was so astonished when I had done it, that I hardly knew where I was. I never will do it again, young ladies, unless you let me—and upon my word, Mr. and Mrs. Baxter, I ask your pardon; but I did n't mean any harm, and I hope Mr. Baxter shall kiss my daughters, though they are not so pretty as his. But they are as good as any man's. Here's another letter from Anny. "One of Mr. Doyle's little dogs" is this [drawing] (only mine is much better drawn). Please keep the letters for me, and I hope the Theology won't shock you. In the Bonbon-box for Miss Sally or Sallie—it's the most absurd way of spelling your name, Miss. Fancy Abraham calling Sarah Sally! It does n't become his age—there's a ring, as she likes 'em. I hope she may keep it. It's made of American pearls (of very mild water, and American gold). Do let me give something for New Year! I have been so immensely paid that I must make presents to somebody. And as, in writing home tomorrow, I shall say who has been kindest to me, and whom I have learned

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to love best in New York, you will please permit me to mention the name of the Saint's Everlasting Rest, viz., B-xt-r.

I am now engaged every day to dinner and supper at Boston (pronounced Bawsn). It is quieter, but I think we drink more than at New York—and on Saturday 8th shall be once more in your neighborhood. What this can mean except a wish to be asked to dinner on that day I cannot conceive. And shall we go to hear Alboni ever or to the play once?

The letter about New Orleans sent from here on Friday 24th did not reach its destination till the 29th. They only offer 2500, and not 5, as I had wildly hoped. I think I may end by taking the half loaf. In spite of the newspapers and their jocularity, my affairs prosper here nearly as much as at New York, and the audiences are in a great state of contentment.

And so I close my letter and wish a happy New Year to you all who have made the close of this one so happy to me.

W. M. T.

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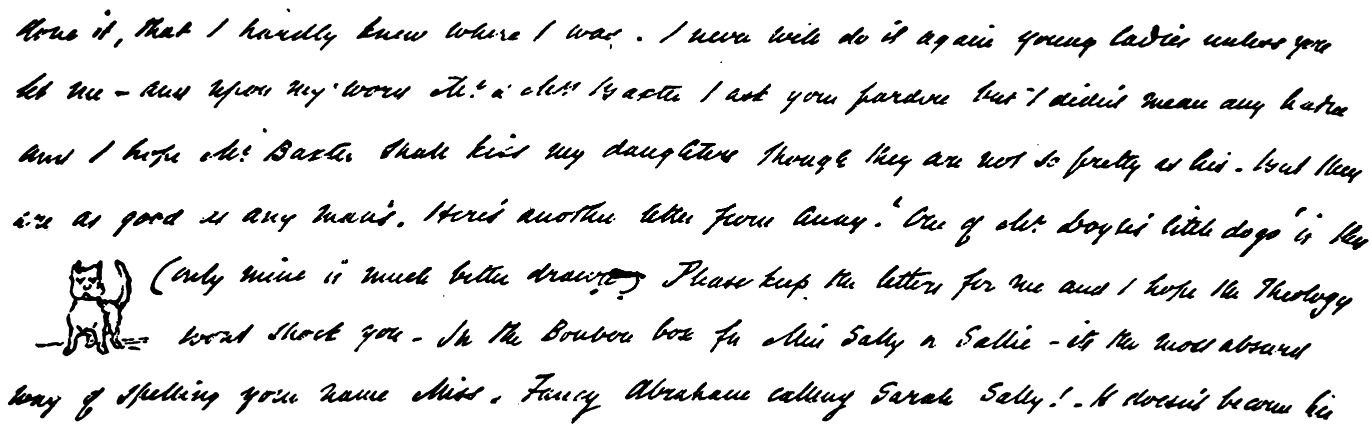
done it, that I hardly knew where I was. I never will do it again young ladies unless you
let me — and upon my word Mrs & Miss Baxter I ask your pardon but I didn't mean any harm
and I hope Mr Baxter shall kiss my daughters though they are not so pretty as his. But they
are as good as any man's. Here's another letter from Anny. 'One of Mrs Doyle's little dogs is like
(only mine is much better drawn) Please keep the letters for me and I hope the Theology
wont shock you. In the Bonbon box for Miss Sally or Sallie — its the most absurd
way of spelling your name Miss. Fancy Abraham calling Sarah Sally! — It doesn't become his

FACSIMILE OF A PART OF A LETTER BY THACKERAY, WRITTEN IN DECEMBER, 1852

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IV

Boston, Jan., 1853

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: Thank you for your kind friendly wishes and for the welcome you have given me—God bless you! How very, very kind you have been to me! I think the young girls write dear pretty letters; and as for the eldest, it is just possible you found out what I thought of her.

I wish I had n't sent away my aide de camp. It's dreadfully lonely and dismal here—awfully slippery in the streets. How can people go out to lectures in such weather? I was quite angry with the audience for being so foolish last night. I went to the Ticknors' last night, and our talk fell on the M's. H. and B.; and I mentioned how the latter had introduced me to a family at New York—a family of the name of Baxter, and the girls began such a laughter! They were on the other side of Lake George, it appears, last year, and he used to go over and pour out his soul to them about Miss Baxter. The report was that he was going to be married to her. Is he? says

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I, confound him; then I hope he'll never come back again. Then I owned myself that I was far gone about that young lady, dilated on her good qualities, ran up her flag, and owned I sailed under it. "And they heard me as I talked an hour of their Eliza" with &c., &c.

I shall see you all once again before I go after the dollars, and,—who knows?—the Mississippi snags. We will try and be jolly a little next week, won't we? and then I shall go on my way like an old Mountebank (I get more ashamed and disgusted of my nostrums daily), and send round the hat through the republic.

Isn't this a merry letter for a New Year? Well, the writer isn't very merry; but he is very sincerely and affᵗˡʸ yours all

W. M. T.

V

Washington

Mr. Anderson's Music Store, Pa. Ave.

Weddlesday Bordig. 1853

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: Thank you for your kind letter of Saturday, which came

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to comfort me on Monday morning, though that other which you promised is still on its way.

A plan came into my head in the dark this morning which has not permitted me to sleep since, and which I humbly submit to you, as good for Mrs. & Miss, for Mr. & Miss or Mr., Mrs. & Miss Baxter.

Monday morning from New York to Baltimore. Eutaw Hotel, where Mr. Thackeray hopes for the honor of seeing you; and will be in waiting.

Tuesday. Washington. President's Levee. Ball at the Assembly room—perhaps dinner at Crampton's.

Wednesday. Receive visits of swells after the ball. Dine with a select party at Mr. T's before his lecture.

Thursday. Go to Mount Vernon and back.

Friday early to Baltimore and see that city.

Saturday—back to New York after embracing Mr. T., who will turn his face towards the South.

Now is n't that a nice plan? If you 2 ladies come, I shall instal you in my rooms and go sleep next door. You 'll be my guests during the trip—what a pleasure it will be to me to pay

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back a little bit of the hospitality I owe you! The ball is very sober, but a beautiful thing, and it would do my weary old eyes good to see a young lady I wot of once again before I go to the South. Send off a telegraph *Yes* tomorrow, won't you, please? I hope all 3 of you will come. But you know how fond I am of Lady Castlewood and how I want her especially. And I want Lucy and Libby, too, but rooms are hard to find.

I sha'n't go farther than Charleston; and am making some arrangements for Rochester and Buffalo at the end of April, before which I shall go probably to Montreal. This might bring me a day or two in New York, might n't it? And then there is Niagara we might see. And then and then, who knows what lies in future years, and whither the winds will blow us? That sounds like po'try, does n't it? I have the most cheering accounts (but this is a secret, I believe) of the international copyright bill, which, upon my conscience, will make me 5000 dollars a year the richer.[1] And I came thundering back from

[1] *Unfortunately, the international copyright movement did not succeed till nearly thirty years after Thackeray's death.*

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Baltimore yesterday, and look wistfully at the door every moment—but no Postman from Second Avenue—plenty from home and good news of my women.

Yesterday a grand dinner at Mr. Crampton's. I sat next a young beauty, who told me she admired my beautiful hands—all Englishmen *kept their nails well!* (upon my word) and my way of "*conveying my food to my mouth*"; all Englishmen, &c. Mme. B—— (an American married to the Russian minister) told me her husband did not belong to the Greek church. "Is he a Lithuanian?" says I (where there are many Catholics). "He leaves me to do the religion," says Her Excellency, thinking Lithuanianism was a form of belief.

Enter Postman. But your letters are always 2 days on the road, and this is a very little bit of a letter, Miss S. S. B. Never mind, you can make up for all by coming, as I do beg and hope you will. What fun we will have! What dismal, little, queer bed rooms to sleep in! . . . I am yours and everybody's in Brownhouse Street.

[*Signed in monogram*] W. M. T.

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VI

Philadelphia, Thursday
Jan., 1853

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: The only fear I had about giving a charity lecture now was lest other cities should ask me for similar exercises, and spoil the run of my lectures, or delay me in their delivery. But I don't think this objection need be a serious one, and if Mrs. Felt and your benevolent ladies think fit on Thursday or Friday in next week, I will gladly work for you. *Fielding & Goldsmith* would, I think, be a good lecture, with possibly a little apropos introduction that I could put together with the aid of a Secretary. It must n't be later than Friday though, as the next day I am engaged here. Mr. Crowe is gone to Baltimore and Washington to arrange about the course there; and everything here is most flourishing—papers full of praise, room full of people, &c. I don't like to send the papers somehow, unless they have any claim to literary merit, and these have no special merit of that sort. I have the same course of dinners

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and suppers to steer through, the people being rather offended because I will go to New York.

Miss B. writes me word that she intends to come, if possible, to Mrs. Rush's on Thursday, which will deprive me of the pleasure of seeing her for 2 days; but on Sunday morning I wonder what time you will breakfast, and whether I shall be up time enough to be at the old brown house. God bless every body in it! and as for Lucy, who wrote me the kindest and prettiest little letter, I know what she deserves, and what I would like to give her. And I am in the middle of a letter to Lucy's sister, too; but that time and the hour won't allow me to finish it.

I am very sorry you have come to that fatal resolve about Washington; but wise Papas and Mammas know best what is good for themselves and their children, and though I don't think I should like any society as much as yours, I shall have plenty of pleasant company between one city and the other. And then for the South; and then for the Spring, and to see you all again; and then for home and my dear young ones; and then for the Second Campaign. That is the

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way man disposes at present; but Fate? who knows how that may settle for me? I send the kindest regards to you all, and am gratefully yours, my dear friend,

W. M. THACKERAY

VII

MY DEAR LUCY: Your dear, kind little letter has given "a fine-looking old gentleman" a great deal of pleasure; and I am sure my girls at home will be grateful to a dear pretty girl that is kind to their father. Well, I 'm not at all frightened now that I had that little parting—ahem! dass ich dich, mein liebes schönes Mädchen, so herzlich einmal geküsst habe—that 's between you and me, is n't it? though you may show it to your Mamma, if you like.

There 's nobody here to fill the place of certain young ladies. There 's a number of other pretty girls, but none like those in the brown house.

I shall see it next week for a little time, and then go away money-hunting for the girls at home; and have no such fun, and meet no such

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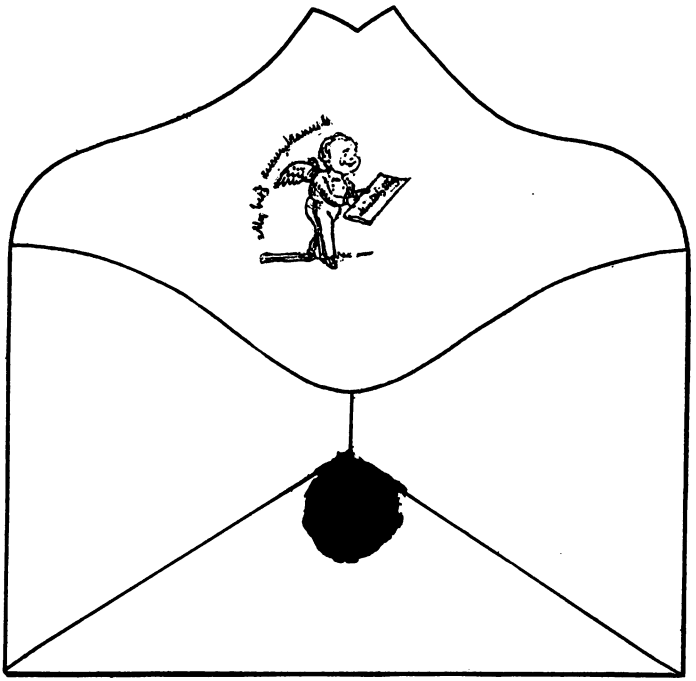
THACKERAY'S SKETCH OF A CUPID WITHIN THE ENVELOP OF A NOTE SENT FROM WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 19, 1853



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dear friends, as in that Second Avenoo. I dont want to meet such or to like other people so much; for there comes the pain at parting with them, and after being very happy, being alone. God bless all good girls! I say; and a happy New Year to 'em! Some day—well, some day I was going to say you will send me a piece of wedding-cake, and though I shan't like it, I shall say happy is the young fellow who fetches Lucy out of the brown house!

God bless you in this and all years—and believe me

Sincerely your friend,

W. M. T.

If you please, Mrs. Baxter, I think I can do without the new supplies till I return to N. Y.

VIII

Washington, Saturday
Feb. 19, 1853

My dear Little Kind Lucy: I began to write you a letter in the railroad yesterday, but it bumped with more than ordinary violence, and I was forced to give up the endeavour.

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I did not know how ill Lucy was at that time, only remembered that I owed her a letter for that pretty one you wrote me at Philadelphia, when Sarah was sick and you acted as her Secretary. Is there going to be always Somebody sick at the brown house? If I were to come there now, I wonder should I be allowed to come and see you in your night-cap—I wonder even do you wear a night-cap? I should step up, take your little hand, which I daresay is lying outside the coverlet, give it a little shake; and then sit down and talk all sorts of stuff and nonsense to you for half an hour; but very kind and gentle, not so as to make you laugh too much or your little back ache any more. Did I not tell you to leave off that beecely jimnayshum?[1] I am always giving fine advice to girls in brown houses, and they always keep on never minding. It is not difficult to write lying in bed—this is written not in bed, but on a sofa. If you write the upright hand it's quite easy; slantingdicular is not so pleasant, though. I have just come back from Baltimore and find your mother's and sister's

[1] *See Introduction.*

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melancholy letters. I thought to myself, perhaps I might see them on this very sofa and pictured to myself their 2 kind faces. Mr. Crampton was going to ask them to dinner, I had made arrangements to get Sarah nice partners at the ball—Why did dear little Lucy tumble down at the Gymnasium? Many a pretty plan in life tumbles down so, Miss Lucy, and falls on its back. But the good of being ill is to find how kind one's friends are; of being at a pinch (I do not know whether I may use the expression—whether "pinch" is an indelicate word in this country; it is used by our old writers to signify poverty, narrow circumstances, *res angusta*)—the good of being poor, I say, is to find friends to help you. I have been both ill and poor, and found, thank God! such consolation in those evils; and I daresay at this moment, now you are laid up, you are the person of the most importance in the whole house—Sarah is sliding about the room with cordials in her hands and eyes; Libby is sitting quite disconsolate by the bed (poor Libby! when one little bird fell off the perch, I wonder the other did not go up and fall off, too!) the ex-

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pression of sympathy in Ben's eyes is perfectly heart-rending; even George is quiet; and your Father, Mother, and Uncle (all 3 so notorious for their violence of temper and language) have actually forgotten to scold. "Ach, du lieber Himmel," says Herr Strumpf—is n't his name Herr Strumpf?—the German master, "die schone Fräulein ist krank!" and bursts into tears on the Pianofortyfier's shoulder when they hear the news (through his sobs) from black John. We have an Ebony femme de chambre here; when I came from Baltimore just now I found her in the following costume and attitude standing for her picture to Mr. Crowe. [See page 35.] She makes the beds with that pipe in her mouf and leaves it about in the rooms. Would n't she have been a nice lady's-maid for your mother and Miss Bally Saxter?

But even if Miss Lucy had not had her fall, I daresay there would have been no party. Here is a great snow-storm falling, though yesterday was as bland and bright as May (English May, I mean) and how could we have lionized Baltimore, and gone to Mount Vernon, and taken

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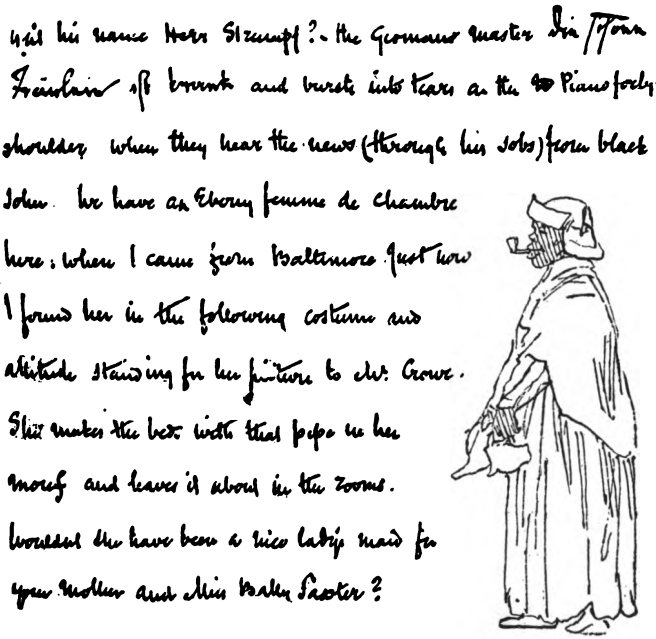
our diversion in the snow? There would have been nothing for it but to stay in this little closet of a room, where there is scarce room for 6 peo-



FACSIMILE OF A PART OF THACKERAY'S LETTER FROM WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 19, 1853

ple, and where it is not near so comfortable as the brown house. Dear old b. h., shall I see it again soon? I shall not go farther than Charleston, and Savannah probably, and then I hope I shall

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get another look at you all again before I commence farther wanderings—O, stop! I did n't tell you why I was going to write you—well, I went on Thursday to dine with Governor and Mrs. Fish, a dinner in honor of me—and before I went I arrayed myself in a certain white garment of which the collar-button-holes had been altered, and I thought of the kind, friendly little hand that had done that deed for me; and when the Fisheses told me how they lived in the Second Avenue (I had forgotten all about 'em)—their house and the house opposite came back to my mind, and I liked them 50 times better for living near some friends of mine. She is a nice woman, Madam Fish, besides; and did n't I abuse you all to her? Good bye, dear little Lucy—I wish the paper was n't full. But I have been sitting half an hour by the poor young lady's sofa, and talking stuff and nonsense, have n't I? And now I get up, and shake your hand with a God bless you! and walk down stairs, and please to give everybody my kindest regards, and remember that I am truly your friend.

W. M. T.

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IX

Washington
Thursday, Feb. 24
1853

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: It may be I shall not have time to write to day before post, and I send a 5 minutes scribble over my breakfast, to say thank you for the kind, kind letters and those which are to come. We are going off in a party to the *Ericsson*, and afterwards I dine at the President's, and then go in the evening to a very, *very* pretty little girl, whom I have been obliged to snub for pertness—it's a long story, too long for now. And on Sunday I have asked 8 or 10 men to dinner,—what a piece of folly it is to spend 100 dollars upon their waistcoats!—and on Monday morning I go to Richmond, Va., where I shall be all the week till Saturday, when I am bound for Charleston. There I shall stop another week, sha'n't I? and the Fates will dispose of me afterwards. So P. cried, did he, on going away? As for C. P., he is a dear young fellow, and I feel quite a regard for him,

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and a comfort in thinking about a character that seems to me so manly and generous and honeſt. And my pretty Sarah practises music, does she? and beaux 1, 2, 3, are gone. There is a faithful old fellow, not much of a buck, who is her very humble servant always, and, with those new shirts and that bag full of new dollars, who knows what a dandy I sha'n't be?

My English acquaintance, Mr. S., has married a charming young creature. . . . I pity her for the life which she is going to lead in our country, her husband away from home all day, and she with scarce enough money to buy enough mutton-chops. But I wish you would all go to Europe; you would be rich there, at leaſt as rich as your neighbours, and happy amongſt yourselves. How I should like to take my place at that kind table again! Well, it will be before very long, please God—and far or near, you know I shall always say Grace for the meals I have had there. I send my beſt regards to old birds and young birds, and am so sorry for George's sore throat. I have got one too.

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X

Friday, Feb. 25, Washington
1853

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: Let us write the other half of the letter this morning. We did not come home till too late from the excursion down the Potomac to the *Ericsson*, through the bitterest cold weather—so cold that had parties from New York come for pleasure to Washington, they would have rued the day when they left a comfortable warm brown-house shelter for Mr. T's dismal little lodgings over the music-store. We had the hoighth of foine company to the *Ericsson*, the 2 Presidents, the Secretaries, Commodores without end, large newspaper editors, and Messrs. Irving and Thackeray, literary gents. The Presidents were both very pleasant; and none of the pictures I have seen do any justice to General Pierce, who is a man of remarkably good presence and fine manners, as natural as any of those English men our friend admired. We talked together very affably for ¼ an hour; I daresay he was relieved by talking with a man

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who wanted nothing from him—and in the evening I dined with President Fillmore, who gratified me by saying that Pierce had proposed to him that they should go together to my last lecture here on Saturday night. I think the proposal was uncommonly friendly and thoughtful, and the news, if puffed properly in the papers, may do the lecturer good. But he is growing so mortally sick of the business that you may hear of his striking work any day. I have been paid for these lectures four times as much money as they honestly deserve, and—&c., &c., I will not entertain you with these old grumbles.

How is it that the post has brought no letter from Miss Saxter this morning? Perfidjious Post, how many disappointments dost thou bring me? But Lucy's was a very pleasant, kind little letter yesterday, and I should like to hear that a good Surgeon had examined the poor little back and pronounced that there was nothing wrong. Do have a surgeon, not a doctor.

To all outward appearance I am having a very good time here, but there 's something wanting. . . . Bon Dieu! what are oysters that we

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should be mindful of them, or champagne that we should wish to go on drinking it? We have had some great feasts, though—that Colonel Preston of Kentucky is a rare good fellow. He kept us roaring with laughter last Wednesday from four o'clock till eight—it 's a mussy that the professional moralist who had to lecture exhibited no sign of the Madeira.

My house in London is let till July. You will go somewhere in June, won't you? Sha'n't we go to Rhode Island? Shall we go to Niagara? You don't know how pleased I am that you should be anxious to hear from me—I wager twopence a halfpenny (2½d Sterling) you thought because no letter was sent on Saturday or Sunday, "Mr. T. is offended because we don't accept his invitation. Mr. T. is very apt to take offense when none is meant," says Miss Sarah, with a sort of half-sigh. No such thing; it was Crowe who forgot to post the letters—and I never like that young woman half so much as when she is performing the 5th commandment with variations; and I think her one thousand times handsomer at Lucy's or her mother's bedside in a

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peignoir (if such be the garment of young ladies) than at Delmonico's in the brilliantest of gowns, whirled round the room by one of those little dandykins. At the balls here Quadrilles are danced, and the waltz does n't seem to me to go above 6 knots an hour. There was a lamentable wheezy Schottisch played last night (at Mrs. ——'s—mother of pretty girl of 16; little Impudence, very penitent and on her good behaviour—brought her a bonbon of a butterfly from the President's, which she pinned on to an exceedingly pretty little—neck, I believe that is the word) and my thoughts went straightway to New York—and while the fair Penitent was dancing, I slipped off in spite of the mother's entreaties to stay and see "such a pretty little supper," and was in bed by 11½, greatly to the bed's surprise. Why, I am got to the end of the page, . . . and lo! I am over at page 5—with this abominable gold pen, too, which won't write plain.

Why did n't the girls send me the daguerreotype? I thought of sending you one, too; but my blushing modesty prevented; and one good one, which has been done here, I thought it was

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my duty to keep for the children at home. Pretty young girls may please an old fellow by such a present; but the old fellow must be rather shy about proffering representations of his ugly countenance—there's something grotesque in that elderly gallantry. How pleasant it is to be alone for half an hour! I talk to you as if we were sitting in the brown house—but then you know I was always thinking, "Why won't Mademoiselle come down?" And when she came, why, the odds were we had a skirmish. But I never found fault with *you*, did I, or was out of humour with any one else? Everybody seems to be aware of my intimacy with the brown house; and ladies mention Miss Baxter to me with a knowing look, of which I acknowledge the meaning with a perfect blandness and readiness of acceptancy. They don't seem to be aware though that Lucy and Libby and my dear Lady Castlewood have no small share of the regard in which I hold that Second Avenue, and angle of Eighteenth Street. Writing home to the children the other day, and talking of you, there were so many "dears" in the sentence, that I laughed

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myself when I read it over. . . . Ah, here comes Monsieur Corbeau! Adieu, sentimentality—let me huddle up the two papers together so that he may n't see what an immense long letter I have written you, and all about nothing, too. And next week I shall write, let us hope, from Richmond, Va., and answer such kind letters as it pleases young persons to send me. I send you all the usual remembrances, and wherever I am, and however good *the time* is, am always wishing I was at home in New York.

Yours always, my dear Mrs. Baxter,

W. M. T.

XI

Febbywerry Twenty-six [1853]. *Sunday*

BEFORE I go to Richmond early early in the morning tomorrow, I must pay a many debts wh I owe here and one of them is a pleasant little debt indeed: to a poor young lady by the name of Miss Lucy whose back I hope is better by this time and whose kind little hand I hereby respectfully salute. How glad I am to have done with Baltimore and Washington! There

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FACSIMILE OF A PART OF THE LETTER ON PAGE 44

Febbywerry Twenty Six. Sunday.

Before I go to Richmond early early in the morning tomorrow, I must pay a many debts wh I owe here and one of them is a pleasant little debt indeed: to a poor young lady by the name of Miss Lucy whose back I hope is better by this time; and whose kind little hand I hereby respectfully salute. How glad I am to have done with Baltimore and Washington! There are 20 pretty girls here: but none of them fit me so completely as some young persons I know of, and I make myself at ease but not at home in any house but a brown one. I keep on hearing famous letters from my girls. Annie writes in glee because they have been at a wedding

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are 20 pretty girls here; but none of them fit me so completely as some young persons I know of, and I make myself at ease but not at home in any house but a brown one. I keep on having famous letters from my girls. Anny writes in great glee because they have been at a wedding party and had plenty of dancing, and because Minny has been greatly admired (I dont think I ever told you that I believe she is very arch bright & pretty-looking) and danced all the dances: and my dearest homely Nanny is quite contented with her little share of partners, and the admiration her little sister gets. Well, Anny has one faithful swain and admirer, who loves her quite as much as a girl need desire: and that gentleman is now writing to Miss Lucy Baxter. But I can't make a funny letter this time: for I can only do that when I am in the mood and I have been passing hours writing a long & sad one to my mother at home.

I think I told your mother about the dinner at the President's and how stupid it was. Yesterday, however, I know you 'll be all glad to hear, the 2 Presidents came together to my lecture

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which was furthermore attended by a numerous & fashionable company; and then I finished the evening by going to *3* soirées—at one of which Mr. Corcoran's I saw Mrs. W. smiling and blushing like the roses of June, and many more New Yorkers all of whom have a certain interest for me because they live near some people I am fond of.

Tomorrow Richmond—next week Charleston and then where I should like to know? Will somebody from the brown house kindly carry this message to the Clarendon for me, and beg that any letters may be forwarded on?

Tomorrow I shall pass down the Potomac on which Mrs. Esmond-Warrington used to sail with her 2 sons when they went to visit their friend Mr. Washington. I wonder will anything ever come out of that preface, and will that story ever be born?

Since I wrote this I began a thinking and wrote a line or two in the French language to Miss Sally, and behold the line or 2 grew into a regular long letter so French in style (whatever it may be in grammar) that I think best not to send

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it but send her and all my homely *English* love instead; and hope in the most simple manner that when she can spare 10 minutes (it was last Tuesday I wrote to her & last Thursday week she to me) again she will send a few more lines to hers and yours all very affectionately

W. M. THACKERAY

XII

Richmond Va. Thursday, 3 March 1853

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER. If you will look out for the Postman on Saturday the Fifth of March I should n't be surprised if he bring you a little scrap of a letter. It will say that the "elderly cupid" arrived here on Tuesday, is delighted with the comfortable friendly cheery little town—the picturesquest he has seen in America—that the negroes instead of horrifying me I am sorry to say amuse me with their never ending grotesqueness and please me with their air of happiness and that in all respects but one I am having a good time—pleasant people, good audiences, quiet handsome cheap comfortable

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hotel everything in fact but a letter from Havenue No 2: on which I had counted as sure as Fate today. On Saturday I go to Charleston—Charleston Hotel please, and O if you would but all come! I dont think I have courage enough for New Orleans the lecture-giving bores me more & more consumedly: but I shant be content unless I hear from Brownhouse St. twice or thrice in a week and having spoiled me you must go on a spoiling of me whilst I remain in the country. It was but to be a scrap as I told you, and it is enough is n't [it] to snatch a minute just before that dimned lecture to say that I am yours always and always

W. M. T.

XIII

1853

March 11, *Charleston*

I AM sure Miss Lucy deserves a much pleasanter letter than I can write in return for that capital one you sent me through Uncle Oliver who covered it in an envelope of his own, which also contained very good reading. And to-

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day has come Mamma's letter of Tuesday, so that I am kept in pretty good news of Brownhouse and all the persons in that ark, which I wish I was there myself.

Upon my word and conscience Miss Lucy I dont know what is going to happen to me tomorrow; whether I shall go South or take the steamboat and rush upon New York. But this I know I am getting very brown-house-sick and homesick too—and as for lecture-sick. O Steward! bring me a basin! I loathe and abominate the sight of the confounded old MSS; and persist wherever I go in telling every body that I am a humbug. So you are all reading Villette to one another—a pretty amusement to be sure—I wish I was a hearing of you and a smoakin of a cigar the while. The good of Villette in my opinion Miss is a very fine style; and a remarkable happy way (which few female authors possess) of carrying a metaphor logically through to its conclusion. . . .

Yesterday night the "fast" lady of C—— gave me a supper. How she did bore me! She told me I was the man of all the world she wished to

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see, though she knew she would n't like me—nor I her—on which I did n't contradict her—and when she told me she was disappointed in me—I told her quite simply I did n't care a fig whether she was pleased with me or not—and that is the feeling your humble servant has regarding most people. But I like them as *I* like, to like me; and you know 3 young ladies and a middle-aged one whom I wish to keep as my friends and about whose good opinion I 'm not indifferent at all. If one goes through the world uneasy to know what Jack and Tom are thinking of you, or, as a young lady says, if having got the admiration of Charly & Willy you are still unhappy until you have secured Dick & Harrys —what an insupportable effort & humbug Life would be! Now I should n't be surprised, if every body should begin by liking Miss Lucy Baxter a great deal—and I hope and suspect I shall see you move through that pleasant little buzzing and flattering crowd, quite serene and undisturbed by their compliments, until TOMKINS makes his appearance for whom and for whom alone you 'll have any flutter or disquiet.

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I dont think there is much in this letter—is there? Nor have I much to say—except to tell of a black ball I have been at, and I have juſt finiſhed talking about that and negroes in general to one Miss Minny Thackeray, whoſe turn for a letter it was—so I cant repeat the black talk over again—it would be like the lecture you see. But they intereſt me very much especially the little pickaninnies with their queer faces and ways which are juſt exactly half way between the abſurd and the pretty, and so create in my mind a ſtrange feeling between pleaſure & pity. Yeſterday where I dined I felt my elbow pinched by a very little hand, and looking down saw such a little elfin bit of a brat with such a queer smile and grimace holding me up a silver basket with bread —And the day before at dinner there was one little negro-boy with a great peacock's feather fan whisking the flies away, whilſt another niggerkin yet ſmaller was deputed to do nothing but watch the process of the dinner, which he did ſtanding back againſt the sideboard and making endleſs faces at the child with the fan. The goodness of the maſters to these children is

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very pleasant to witness. I wish some of our countrymen could see it. I wish we knew many things about America at home; where there will be one person before very long please God who will be able to say that people here are not all cruel, & that there are some gentlemen and ladies, O wonder of wonders! as good as our own!

Good bye dear Lucy and all round your bed & elders and youngers—believe me always sincerely your friend

W. M. T.

XIV

Charleston, 12 *March*, 1853

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER. My fate for the next fortnight at least, seems pretty well decided since I wrote to Miss Lucy yesterday; and it is ordained that I go tomorrow to Savannah stay a week there and return afterwards to this place to give the rest of my sermons. And from this I shall go to Richmond most probably and say out my say there: if their enthusiasm lasts 4 weeks, I am sure of a great welcome at the pretty little cheery place—such a welcome

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as is better than dollars,—much pleasanter than the dreary acquiescence of the audiences here. But you will go on writing to Charleston, won't you, please? . . . So Mr. Crowe & I sit up in my room, and draw pictures of niggers & saunter about & get through the day as we can—of course there are dinners & suppers in plenty. Plague take 'em! I wish they did not come so thick.

I should n't have written today, (for I suspect Lucy & her Mamma will get their letters on the same morning) but for these resolutions come to last night; and this enclosed letter of Anny's which I think you 'll like to read. I fancy my friends are pleased with my pleasure; and I am sure your kind mother's heart will understand my pleasure at having such a dear noble girl belonging to me. She was writing this one day that I at Washington was thinking of a Valentine for Lucy & Libby. Why, in 5 or 6 years, she will be able to do the writing business; and I can sit on the sofa as easy as the Professor of Deportment in Bleak House.

Last night a bigwig of the place, Mr. King, gave a supper in my honour. He promised a

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small party: he had 40 gentlemen: and of course as many handshakes and introductions took place. Professor Agassiz, (a delightful *bonhommious* person as frank and unpretending as he is learned and illustrious in his own branch) told me Mr. King *dared* not ask a small party: for all who were n't asked of the society here would be offended at the omission.

Enter the Committee of the Lectures with 665$ for your humble servant. That 's very well for three lectures is n't it? And outside 3 gentlemen are waiting to take me a walk into the country. So I shake Mr. and Mrs. Baxter & Mr. Strong by the hand, and give my paternal benediction to the young ladies & their brothers and put on my hat and sally forth.

XV

13 *Young St. Kensington*

WONT the girls write directly?

May 1853

MY DEAR BAXTER. I must n't let the pilot go on shore without shaking you by the hand, and saying a last God bless you to you

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and all yours who have been so kind to me. I can't believe that we shall not meet many many times before our life's journies are ended; and you will pay us a visit in England, or I and my girls will come over to you—wherever we are (There they go cheering from the "Arabia" as we pass her) I shall always have for you the most grateful feelings of regard. Now that we are really under way, it is best I think that the affair should be ended so—partings are the dreariest events of life and were always best done quickly. God bless your kind wife and all her young ones; and Strong and his children. My heart is quite full as I think of your kindness, and I am & hope I shall always be

Sincerely your friend

W. M. T.

XVI

13 *Young St., Kensington—Tuesday*
May 1853

ISN'T it provoking? I have 2 pooty letters one for Sally and for Lucy and Libby—and behold they are 4 miles off, and its too late to

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fetch them before post. They were written on board. We had capital weather all things considered 10 days, ½ passage: at Liverpool on Sunday, here yesterday: and seeing that Lady Stanley of Alderley had a ball that night I plumped into the midst of the London world at once—and now and now it seems like a dream, that Second Avenue, and those 6 months in America. Here 's the old club, and the old comfortable books; I have seen almost all my old friends including the *frying-pan*—I bore being near it without beginning to fry. I care neither for frying-pan nor fire now. Crowe has gone away to his family like a fond, worthy fellow as he is —and we are parted and he seems like a dream too. Where are all the people I was so intimate with two days ago?—those pretty women, those good fellows, that kind Bishop of Montreal and jolly Captain? We all shook hands at parting on the tender steamer and on the shore did n't care about each other a bit any more—Fate driving each different ways and to pursue his different selfish interests. But though it is a whole fortnight (no, 13 days) since I saw 2nd Avenue, I 've

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not forgotten *you* yet. No, please God,— I look at the sunset very very kindly, and do you know I have n't had the heart to move my watch from New York time? I pulled it out last night and showed it to the people at the ball and said There that 's the *real* time. They said Is n't this a beautiful ball, and says I—Pish—this is nothing—go to New York if you want to see what a ball is. —I saw as I spoke the stately Knickerbockers, I saw the young ladies dressed in stripes, rainbows, and 2 thousand colours—I saw a young person whirling round with Wilson Eyre the beautiful tobacco-adorned youth, and then on a settee talking to him.—Balls says I indeed! as if there could be any balls after New York!

I have a little business that keeps me here a day or two and then to Paris to the children. I am writing in a scamper so as to be in time for the post; which I could n't write any sooner on account of business I have had, and 10000 friends whom I must perforce see—but the mail must n't go away without a shake of the hand to dear friends in the West, and a God bless you all— I dont think I shall send that letter to Sally

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though, "its full of wit and jibes and scorn"—I want to keep 'em down, and do my best: but up they will come, and I tore up one two three on the voyage because they were so bitter.

And so good bye and God bless all yours my dear Mrs. Baxter—saying so seems like shaking hands and coming down the steps again. It was best to do it at once though, was n't it? Ah me how dreary my house looked! I could n't sleep all night in the lonely place—and I daresay was thinking about the Second Avenue. I send my love once more to all friends there, and am yours always very gratefully and faithfully

W. M. THACKERAY

With the verses and flowers sent to Miss Lucy W. Baxter on her birthday, Thackeray included the following whimsical note:

XVII

MISS LUCY I wish you 100 happy returns of this happy day I wish the verses were prettier and likewise the bouquay. But Mr. Crowe went out and ordered it, that is all I have to say. And now they 've brought the flowers home

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(tinned up in that queer way) the verses read much too solemn and pompously for they. And so for your prosperity perpetually I pray and send my very best compliments to your Papāy and your Mammāy, likewise to those darling pink bonnets Miss Libby and Miss Sarāy with whom last night we enjoyed ourselves so very much at the play. Subscribing myself your faithful friend

W. M. THACKERĀY

With some flowers for Lucy's Birthday

April 15. 1853.

Seventeen young rosebuds in a ring
With clustering sister flowers beset,
Twined in a fragrant coronet,
While Lucy's servants this day bring.
Be this the birthday wreath she wears;
All fresh and bright and symbolling
The number of her budding years,
The blushes of her maiden spring.

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Emblems of Love and Youth and Hope!
True hearts and friends your Mistress greet,
Continue to be pure and sweet,
And grow the lovelier as you ope!
Delicate nursling! fenced about
By fondest care, and cherished so
You scarce have heard of storms without
Of thorns that bite, and winds that blow.

Kindly your virgin life's begun
And still, we pray, that Heaven may send
A genial air, a ripening sun,
A happy time, a happy end.
Fair child of Spring! wherever your place,
In father's hall, or husband's home;
Live on, expanding into bloom,
Developing in modest grace!

W. M. T.

FACSIMILE OF THE VERSES SENT ON APRIL 15, 1853
TO MISS LUCY W. BAXTER

In the letter of May 10, 1853, *Thackeray refers to the revision of the verses which appears in his published works.* (*See Miss Lucy W. Baxter's comments on page* 12.)

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XVIII

May 10, *Kensington*, [1853]

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER. The letters from the dear old brown house have just come in and find me still in London laid up for a day or two with a face blistered & hideous with creosote from that unlucky tooth. I wanted to go to a public dinner to-morrow and speak something about America out of a full grateful heart: but this accident makes me too hideous for appearance in public and may delay my visit to Paris for a day or two.

I am thankful to find how glad my friends are to see me—their welcome is as cordial as welcome can be. If God Almighty denies me that greatest blessing of all a wife to love me —are n't there many compensations? I wish I could walk over to the 2[d] Avenue this morning and show you a letter just come in from Anny —such a noble tender letter. There are others here whom I have told you of whose affection cheers and honours me I think I may say: and if I may speak, speak farther to you who have

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listened so kindly & often to my egotistical prattle—I hope please God that the love and friendship I have had in your family may even go so far as to do some public benefit—the remembrance of you all sanctifies your country in my eyes—when people speak here sneeringly as Londoners will talk I break out indignantly and tell them how much good and worth and love and good-breeding there is in the country of wh. they talk so flippantly. And I pray Heaven it may be my chance as it will be my endeavour to be a Peacemaker between us and you and to speak good will towards you.

I wonder shall I come back in the fall or wait till next year? My publishers outbid each other for books, and I can make as matters stand as much money in the next 12 months here in Europe, as yonder where I have some dear friends. . . .

I have n't time to day to send the young ones a letter—What fun it would be if they would come over with Uncle Oliver! I shan't try to get them cards for the grand balls though. To know that society you must live in it long: poor

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pretty Mrs. S——was complaining sadly of want of friends and the coldness of English-women, & that after being 4 years in London, at the head of a splendid house too, she had no intimate friend. Poor, poor little Mrs. S—— what will she do when she comes? I saw B——'s brother t' other day (B is home by this time) H——talked about America in a manner so pert and odious that I should have liked to wring his little neck. His is the arrogance of a little, almost deformed man. The grand ladies' is ignorance not arrogance generally they are quite as good as other folks, nay in some respects better than our's. Lady Stanley was quite pleased at my bursting into her ball; my elegant apparition made quite a sensation. My praises of the American women are going all about the town, & Lady S says are outrageous. Some of the immensest big-wigs have asked me to dinner: but I refuse all to go to the children. My dears (this of course is to the 3 young ladies) I would rather sit in in the brown house than at the big-wiggest table. When I come out next —— wants to come with me. He wears a wig, he is a wid-

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ower, he looks 10 years younger than I do, he has 5000£ a year. One of his daughters a sweet little girl of 17 rosebuds whom I left quite pretty and blushing has been stricken with some malady and I found when I came back a pale little shrivelled old woman with a wrinkled hand. He has been absent for 12 years from his 3 girls who are our children's playmates. . . . How happy Anny & Minny must be to know their father and have him back! they said to their aunts.

Here comes *such* a grand carriage to the door. Who a mussy is it? Ho Ho! It is THE AMERICAN MINISTER and *Miss Wilcox* left the card. Lucky she didn't see me with my pantomime face. Bless you dear Mary! Mary is her name. I told you I would learn it. I sate with her 2 hours t'other day, such a delightful time—only—only Ingersoll sate there the whole 2 hours and never would budge. I have cut down the 17 rosebuds into a shorter measure as thus

Seventeen rosebuds in a ring
Thick with sister flowers beset
In a fragrant coronet
Lucy's servants this day bring

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TO AN AMERICAN FAMILY

Be it the birthday wreath she wears
Fresh & bright & symbolling
The young number of her years
The soft blushes of her Spring &c

W^h^. tune do you like best—New or old Metre?

This seems like talking at home does n't it? with all of you girls sitting with your work and anker chiefs & the lady of the house on the—here comes another knock Mr. Crowe's brother —I must shut up the letter—no more talking with the brown house to day Thank you for your letters my dear girls, I 'll try & come back, I 'll try & do all that every one asks me and I intend to be always your aff^te^ old friend

W. M. T.

HERE we are together again I need not say who are uppermost in our thoughts

H. B. M.

Oho! [*In Thackeray's handwriting.*]

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XIX

19 *Rue d'Angoulême St. Honoré, Paris*
18, 19 *May*

IT is not a month ago, and New York seems to me years off. Is it possible there were people there quite sad when I came away, and that I was half ready to cry at leaving them? We don't use any more pocket-handkerchiefs now—we think very quietly about dear friends across the Atlantic. Since I 've been here especially I have been in such a whirl and jangle that solitude is out of the question, and even quiet thought: my room is opposite a braziers who begins at day-break with a thousand clinking hammers: I can't hear myself speak to you across the water. An hour before breakfast, (this is 2 hours before breakfast) the girls begin whirring away on the piano. They have made immense progress: they will really play very well and all for love not of music but of their father—they know what tunes I like—solemn old fashioned airs of Haydn and Mozart and intend to treat me to these. . . . I am

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puzzled what to do next though—the excellent governess whom they have had here is much too young & pretty to come to a single man's house, and too proud to bear the subordinate position these ladies must take in London: where people slight them don't invite them &c &c. Here her daily lessons over she goes into the world with her mother and is anybody's equal. It 's a funny little world my old folks live in—quite unlike the great one to which I 'm accustomed and I walk round my mother's little circle a stranger and a heavy old Swell annoyed at the airs which I can't help fancying I give myself. My portrait the original of the print as large as life swaggers in the little drawing-room so and looks so pompous from every corner that I can't help looking at it. I 've not been well since I have been here. That has given the kind old stepfather an opportunity to administer globules. He is 72 and the brave old soldier who mounted breaches and led storming parties is quite a quiet old man lean & slippered. My mother is as handsome and as good as ever: and all her little society worships her. You see I am falling into the

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regular small-town small talk. I have not been into the world at all: and have been here a week and it seems an age. From a twaddling society what can you have but twaddling? It's hard that there should be something narrowing about narrow circumstances. The misdeeds of maids-of-all-work form no small part of the little conversations I hear: and yesterday morning I caught Miss Minny in the kitchen with a rueful face taking leave of Louise our ex-maid, who was going away and who had been kind to my girls. I did not like to give her more than 10 francs: but am glad I arrived time enough to console her parting hour with that gratuity. Now what am I to do without a governess and ought I to take the girls away from one who teaches them so capitally and shall I begin a novel in 20 numbers or shall I get ready to come back to New York? Here are a set of questions and I 've nothing but these egotistical queries to write.

The advance of this place in material splendour is wonderful: they are pulling down and building up as eagerly as in New York; and the

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Rue de Rivoli is going to be the grandeſt street in the world—all the houses as tall as the St. Nicholas—and the palaces and the gardens looking so ancient and noble. The place swarms with Americans I'm told: and I'm quite angry to see how like the Broadway beaux are to the Boulevard dandies. Borrowing their coats from Frenchmen—for shame! Silly monkies why don't they have tails of their own—I mean coat-tails—and not ape these little creatures? I wish I had not forgotten the name of your relative here—her who writes to Sarah about the fashions.—I would like to go & talk to some one who knows you. B. M. bounced in on me juſt as I was closing my laſt letter; and it was all for the sake of you that we shook hands so cordially. . . .

Yeſterday I spent by myself for the moſt part: refused all invitations went to see the pictures, went to dine at the Trois Frères, went to the play by myself—and enjoyed the amusement not a little and the solitude still more. Met 2 fellow-passengers out of the Europa; one a Philadelphia Quaker in an imbroydered waiſtcoat and

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yellow gloves walking the streets at 5 o'clock—going to dine with 18 Americans at Véry's he said. I think I should like to have been one—that twang sounds very friendly indeed to me: and in fact I feel just as much at home on your side as on ours. So Sarah and M. had a many walks and rides, had they? Lucky dog! And I that used to come for weeks and weeks & could never get a chance—there was the milliner or the French mistress or something. Poor old fellow!—Will they never bring the breakfast? If the old folks had been but a little earlier, I should not have written that last sentence and got through the letter without jibes & scorn. But these grow milder as time passes: and when I think of your kindness and constant welcome I promise you there is no scorn in my mind then. God bless you all. Write to Kensington please: and as many as will to yours ever

W. M. T.

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XX

London, Friday, 3 June 1853

I THANK the kind elders round the oak table for their friendly letters and remembrances —and they will please consider this present as written individually to each though addressed as in duty bound to my dear Mrs. Baxter to whom I give my arm when we go in to dinner you know, before grace is said, and we all fall to. I can not send you much of a letter. If it were full of what I am doing it would be full of eating and drinking. There is feasting here for me at all hours if I like: and my reputation for a great appetite is very different here from what it used to be at New York. Yesterday I transacted breakfast luncheon and dinner out of doors; meeting Mrs. Stowe at the second of those meals, with whom I was very agreeably disappointed. In place of the woman I had imagined to myself after the hideous daguerrotype I found a gentle almost pretty person with a very great sweetness in her eyes and smile. I am sure she must be good and truth-telling from her face

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and behaviour: and when I get a country place and a leisure hour shall buckle to Uncle Tom and really try to read it. I told Lord Shaftesbury though (who seems to worship Mrs. Stowe) that there were other people besides blacks in America & that there were 23 millions of whites who interested me still more than the niggers. What feasts I had at Barings and Sturgis's! On Wednesday I asked two Americans to dine here: and as my invaluable plate is still at the banker's, we had to serve the soup with a tea-cup. I rather expect this fact will appear in the American papers some day, as an instance of my avarice or my poverty, and warn you before hand what the real state of the case is.

If the young ladies had been staying with me I could have got them a great ball for last night. Young Mr. Beaumont of Northumberland gave it: the youthful owner of 100000£ a year. Two of the young ladies of the ball were at my dinner, they wore white filmy dresses all over Vandykes; and one of them was covered with a sort of sprouts of roses, very neat. After a week of this though I think I shall break down. I get

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confused about the people I meet & don't meet, and they figure before me as in a dream. Can you understand why this letter is so stupid? Is it not possible that I have a headache?—Yes, but the steamer will not wait over to-morrow; and I know you 'll be disappointed at Brownhouse unless you have a line.

I am looking out for a quiet sea-side place where I may settle down and write a book. By this you will understand that my visit to New York won't be till next Autumn probably: and then who knows perhaps I may bring the girls with me. Yes, but then what girls will there be left in the Brown House? Cupid may carry off every one of my three pretty Daguerrotypes between this time & next year: but I feel perfectly certain we shall all meet and have good times again, and never for a moment suppose that we are parted.

If you please, Uncle Oliver, to give a hearty shake of the hand to Hicks de ma part, and congratulate him on his safety. Baring looked glum when I talked to him about eight per cent and railroad shares in America: he would rather I

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would take four I think. Well, this may cause me to pay 3 visits to America in place of 2. Be sure I shall be glad of any excuse that brings me.

I have found one of the missing sheets, that to Miss Sarah and send the same, and the very kindest regards and remembrances to you all from yours, dear Mrs. Baxter, gratefully ever

W. M. THACKERAY

XXI

June, 1853

I DON'T know whether the morning papers will announce that "Mr. Thackeray has left town for the season": but if I had staid a week longer I think I should have been buried there, or had another fever; the dinners are so severe and my powers of self-restraint so miserably incompetent before the daily temptation. . . . I am tired of the great world pretty well, and am as glad to get quit of it after 3 weeks idleness and lounging and gormandizing as if I had been born a Marquis. I think of the future for my girls and what they are to do in the tramp and bustle of

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that London life, and have a mind to cut the belle société altogether, and go and live among my equals. Well they have their tramp & bustle too, their crowding to parties long dinners squeezy balls, flatterers toadies and what not just as in the grandee world. I went to a concert at the house of a cousiness of mine who has a fine mansion in Portman Square, and 6000£ a year to bestow upon any one who marries her; there were as many sneaks about her as in the very politest circles, and people were as eager to get to her party as to a Duchess's—it 's only in the degree—the human nature is the same everywhere, and then the good society is incontestably better than the second-chop—the dinners are so much better and shorter. O ye gods! What fine dinners I have had in the last 3 weeks! How sick I grew of them! Did I write the afflicting news that I have been obliged to have out 3 teeth? Miss Sally, I shall never fall in love any more. There 's a pretty girl with whom I could do it though: there was a little talk about her coming with my girls as their governess and dame de compagnie. But says I

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"No, my dear, you are a great deal too good looking." Knowing the susceptibility of this aged heart I'm determined to put it to no more temptation than I can help. She is left behind and my heart is perfectly easy. I think of writing a book "The adventures of a Gentleman in search of a Governess." I have had some amusing scenes in quest of that person; 2 days ago had all but engaged one—a Swiss, clever, 30, agreeable, lively, well-mannered—I begged her just to write down the address of the lady with whom she lived and behold! she can't write—or writes about as well as a cook maid. I have signed and sealed with Bradbury and Evans for a new book in 24 numbers like Pendennis. Price 3600£ + 500£ from Harper and Tauchnitz. It 's coining money is n't it? and if I can make another expedition to a certain country as remunerative as the last, why, 2 years hence will see my girls snugly provided for. Thank God. I don't (I believe) take any pride out of this prosperity but receive it with a thankful heart. Curtis's article touched me very much. I hope that is the right view of the character. So with all its shortcom-

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ings may God Almighty find it and deal with it. And I like to think that I have left that sort of good opinion behind me amongst those I love in your country. So poor old James has been assaulting me in a lecture! Well, my hide is strong enough not to wince under his old kicks. —I think you must have your glasses to read this small writing. I have only my old gold pen at hand which is for drawing not writing generally, and scribble, where do you think Miss Sarah? At Dessein's Hotel *in Sterne's Room!* I came to bed instead of travelling on to Paris through the night. It has been pouring with rain all day, and the wind has got comfortably up so as to blow quite a gale. I'm not very well, and shall go on only to Amiens tonight; and so Mrs. Baxter gets a long letter, because it is raining, and I have nothing to do. That was why you used to get such long visits at New York from sheer selfishness of course—but a selfishness not altogether unkindly. I wish this was 3 pages of the book—that would be 75 dollars: but it's only twopence you see, which I bring to my dear kind friends at the Brown House.

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Sterne's picture is looking down on me from the chimney piece at which he warmed his lean old shanks ninety years ago. He seems to say "You are right. I *was* a humbug: and you, my lad, are you not as great?" Come, come Mr. Sterne none of these tu quoques. Some of the London papers are abusing me as hard as ever I assaulted you—one fellow says the *perjured historian* &c &c—meaning me. I only read 3 lines though & think it is the same man who abused me elsewhere—one R. who has a grudge against me about his wife. I was called in bien malgré moi to interfere in their family quarrels, and conducted my arbitration with such admirable justice that they both detest me. You are all away taking your pleasures from the brown house. Again poor C. P. has had his tooth out no doubt. I saw B. on Tuesday at a rich bankists, Mr. Raikes Currie, who has a funny & amusing young son who has been at New York. I go about praising you Americans to all that will hear. Hush! between ourselves I know some of what I say is unjust: and that I speak too favorably: but if you could hear the vulgar-

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ity and ignorance and outrecuidance on our side! It sets me in a rage when I listen to it.

Monday at Paris. I travelled from Calais with a very honest expectoratory countryman of yours, who gave utterance to all his inward emotions quite freely. He shook me warmly by the hand (his was not kept as Miss Smith of Washington likes them) and said "I have heard of what you have been saying about *os* sir," and I 'm glad what I said did give pleasure and has been heard elsewhere. It is pleasant to be again in quiet with the dear old and young folks.

XXII

4th of July, Hip, Hip Hurra, 1853

FOR the last 10 days the undersigned has been so undecided ("undersigned" "undecided"—not good language, and then that blot ought n't I to begin a new shee[t])—Well I think I have at last determined that we set off on Wednesday to Hambourg w[h] will be our first halt and where I shall try and do some of my new book. It won't be a good one—not a step for-

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wards as some ambitious young American folks would have it; but a retreat rather—however if I can get 3000£ for my darters, I mean 3000 *to put away* besides living, I will go backwards or forwards or any way. It torments me incessantly, and I wander about with it in my interior, lonely & gloomy as if a secret remorse was haunting me. I saw a pretty American girl in a carriage in the Rue Vivienne today. She was like you, she had your colour &c—a great gush of feelings came tumbling out of this bussam at the sight. I wanted to run after the carriage to stop it and speak to her and say "Do you know anything of one S. B. of New York?" The carriage whisked away leaving me alone with my feelings—O ye old ghosts! I declare I saw nothing of the crowded city for a minute or two so completely did the *revenans* hem me in—Nothing is forgotten. We bury 'em but they pop out of their graves now and again and say Here we are Master. Do you think we are dead? No, No, only asleep. We wake up sometimes we come to you we shall come to you when you are ever so old; we shall always be as fresh and mischievous as

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we are now. We shall say Do you remember S. S. B. do you remember her eyes? Do you think she had 2 dimples in her cheeks and don't you recollect this was the note of her laugh, that used to be quite affected at times but you know the music of it, you poor old rogue? Yes the laugh and the looks flash out of the past every now and then, and whisk by me just like that carriage in the Rue Vivienne. A novel thought! Suppose I make the hero of the new book in love with some one? and then suppose I make him jilted? He won't break his heart. I dont think he'll have much of a heart, and besides breaking it in the very first numbers would be preposterous. (Another blot on the next page this ink is very liquid.) I wrote your mother about sleeping in Sterne's room at Calais; was n't it queer? I wonder whether all literary men are humbugs and have no hearts. I know one who has none. Why you may marry anybody you please & I don't care: I dare say there is some young fellow at Newport or Saratoga at this very minute—and I 'm amused I give you my honour I 'm amused. *L'autre* and her lord &

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master are reconciled and I 'm not in the least annoyed: and one of my loves being here the other day with two babies I nursed the youngest with a graceful affection that the father himself could n't have equalled. . . . Is n't the dinner coming? What a pocket full of news I am giving you!

July 5

CHARLES Pearman, my new servant, arrived from London last night, and brought me no letter from you. Do you know Mademoiselle that this is most igstordinary and unpleasant? How can you tell that he did n't come from London solely in order that I might have that letter? and now —rien—nothing—nix! We all march tomorrow morning. Shall I have time to fill this sheet ere we go—Ingrate! I should have had time but I have nothing to reply to. A friend of many people here, an Irish Doctor, has just been to be knighted in England; and so they are going to give him a dinner; and so I am to be in the chair and make the speeches; that is my last appearance at Paris, & tomorrow O for fun & freedom & fresh air!

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What letters have n't I been answering all day!—No more small hand-writing Miss Sarah, no more cramped hand, no time for that. But I *will* send this away from Paris, and before I get farther from you; although I know there 's nothing in it but that I 'm yours &c &c &c.

One of the letters was from Mrs. Gore—Tell Mrs. Dering this, please; Miss C. yesterday was married to the Lord —— . . . a sad scapegrace I 'm afraid ruined long ago. How can such a couple get on? How could I write a congratulatory letter to Mamma? I tried & it was as glum as a funeral. All I could say by way of consolation was Marriages that seem to augur very well often turn out very unhappy—therefore this that looks so bad *may* turn out quite the reverse. It was pleasant to get a heap of fine invitations from London and think one was free of them—Did I tell you in page 1 or 2 that I think of passing a good bit of the winter here? My dear kind old stepfather gets very old. His goodness to the children has been admirable. They are a little too much for him & even for my mother I think but they will be very un-

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happy without them so instead of going to Rome as I thought, why we will sit down here in a little tranquillity, and I'll try & do my duty filially as well as paternally. O how I wish you would all come here for the winter! What would n't I give to hear somebody laugh, and see somebody smile! I don't like to think of your dear kind mother's illness; and the non-receipt of these letters somehow fills me with a queer disquiet about you. I have been reading Nile Notes. Do you know it's uncommonly clever? Or is it because of that Criticism in Putnam that my grateful eyes are opened to Curtis's merits. The book is capital . . . too luscious to read much of at a time; but I send the author my regards and am glad to like what he has done so. Now I will shut up this. Now I will send my love to you all: now I take Sarah's two hands, the last you know, and look in her face (don't smile in that saucy way Miss) and say Good bye, dear Sarah, always remember I'm your affectionate old friend

W. M. T.

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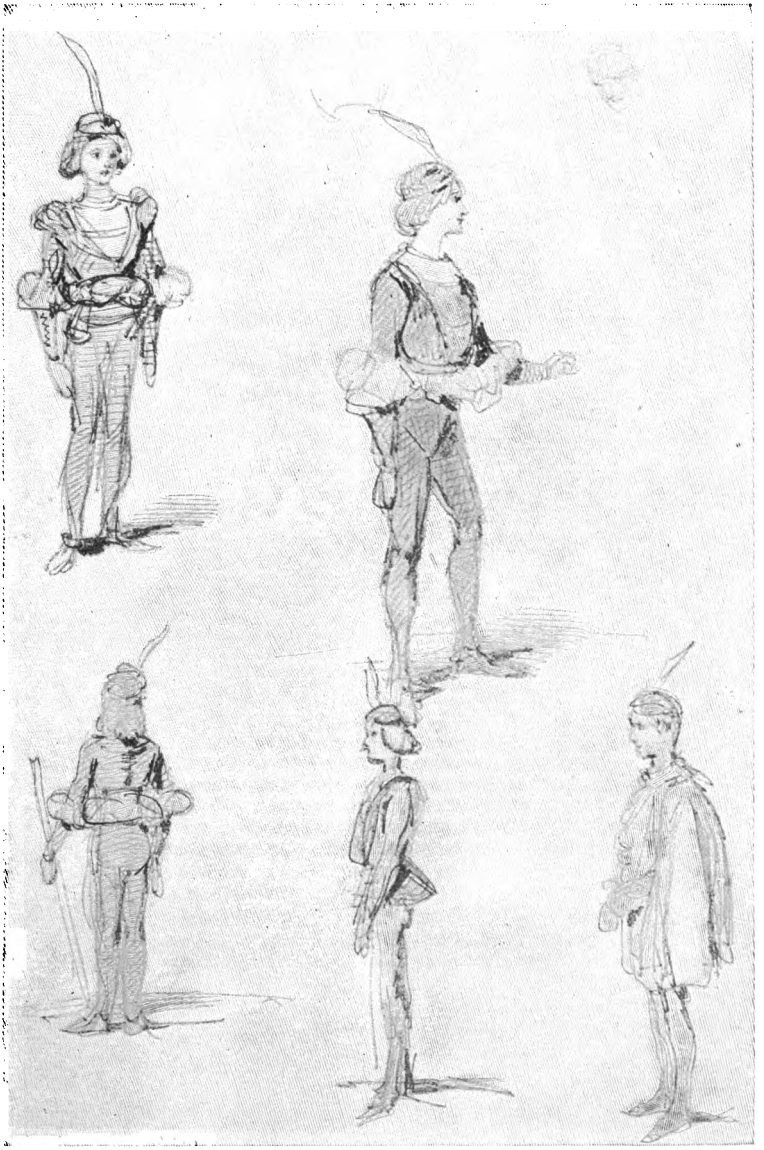

THACKERAY'S SKETCHES OF A MEDIEVAL PAGE
FOR A FANCY-BALL COSTUME

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XXIII

Vevey, July 26, 1853

THE fourth of July landed a little letter which has been 3 weeks on its way since, before it found the person to whom it was addressed—I got it at Lausanne the day before yesterday—a glum little letter. . . . What for do you reproach me? . . . Haven't I written you 3 letters for one? . . .

I think I should have liked to hear of that gallant young P. being made happy—I like him because he 's handsome and honest. And as for you I think you have got so much character, resolution and good temper that you would make yourself happy in making other folks so—and would accommodate yourself to deficiencies in savoir vivre like a young philosopheress. Besides that young fellow, as far as I could see, is a thorough gentleman and why should not his belongings be so? . . . B. is spoiled by the heartlessness of London—which is awful to think of —the most godless respectable thing—thing's not the word but I can't get it—I mean that

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world is base and prosperous and content, not unkind—very well bred—very unaffected in manner, not dissolute—clean in person and raiment and going to church every Sunday—but in the eyes of the Great Judge of right & wrong what rank will those people have with all their fine manners and spotless characters and linen? They never feel love, but directly it 's born, they throttle it and fling it under the sewer as poor girls do their unlawful children—they make up money-marriages and are content—then the father goes to the House of Commons or the Counting House, the mother to her balls and visits—the children lurk up stairs with their governess, and when their turn comes are bought and sold, and respectable and heartless as their parents before them. Hullo!—I say—Stop!—where is this tirade a-going to and apropos of what?—Well—I was fancying my brave young Sarah (who has tried a little of the pomps & vanities of her world) transplanted to ours and a London woman of society—with a husband that she had taken as she threatens to take one sometimes just because he is a good parti. No

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—go and live in a clearing—marry a husband masticatory, expectoratory, dubious of linen, but with a heart below that rumpled garment—let the children eat with their precious knives —help the help, and give a hand to the dinner yourself—yea, it is better than to be a woman of fashion in London, and sit down to a French dinner where no love is. Immense Moralist! I think I 'll call in Anny now, and give her a turn at the new novel. I see a chapter out of the above sermon and you know I must have an i to the main chance—

(*The same evening*)

I CALLED in Miss Anny at the above moment of writing, and we had a good time till dinner-time the story advancing very pleasantly. I am not to be the author of it. Mr. Pendennis is to be the writer of his friend's memoirs and by the help of this little mask (wh. I borrowed from Pisistratus Bulwer I suppose) I shall be able to talk more at ease than in my own person. I only thought of the plan last night and am immensely relieved by adopting it. Alexander Smith is a

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grand young fellow and has shot one or two bow shots immensely high, but he is not up to the great Keats or the great Alfred yet and doubt whether he ever can be—As for my small beer; why talk about [it] in the same breath?—Well Small beer is good of its sort—some day you 'll have my little barrel, and I hope you 'll relish a glass or two.

There 's such a magnificent landscape or lakescape at my windows as I write. The sun just now has been departing westwards, *your*wards so splendidly! There 's such a crowd of Americans at this hotel—Almost all the women pretty, some of the men so awfully vulgar. I read in the Strangers' book:

NAME	COUNTRY	PROFESSION	WHENCE COME	WHITHER GOING
Smith J.	*U. S. A.*	*Clergyman*	*Genêvre*	*Over the whole lot.*
Smith T.				

Fancy *Genêvre* and "*over the whole lot*"! There it is in the Strangers' book.

August 7

Bon Dieu! It is 12 days since this little note was begun: It has been stopped because I had

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not calculated the steamers well, because I was busy writing, because we have been travelling —to Geneva to Lausanne to Vevey again and thence to Butte, Freyburg, Berne—It has cost 80£ for one month for 3 people and a servant, travelling gently and living soberly, 400 dollars —so you see what you may do: but if you travel hard you must add other 100 dollars to this reckoning. At Vevey among the 100,000 Americans I saw the name of B. Can it be Lucy's young man?—and there was a lady, I think her name was P., who I am sure must be Mrs. C. S's sister like her in person and in voice especially —and I was going to speak to her but she had a nice little son whom she bullied so that I could not open my mouth. I pass whole days sometimes and scarce open it, if the people are not to my liking I cant speak, and seem igh and aughty—I 'm in low spirits about the Newcomes. It 's not good. It 's stupid. It haunts me like a great stupid ghost. I think it says why do you go on writing this rubbish? You are old, you have no more invention &c. Write sober books, books of history leave novels to younger folks.

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You see half of my life is grumbling; and lecturing or novel-writing or sentimentalizing I am never content. . . . Are there any more letters come from America for me? Yesterday we were walking up a hill from Freyburg, I come to a carriage, and a voice from within calls out How is Miss Baxter? Fancy a voice calling out How is Miss Baxter on the top of a Swiss hill! It was a friend of Mrs. Sturgis's—and the lonely cavities of my heart echoed how is Miss Baxter—Anny and I had been talking about you just before and she had been telling me how my stepfather, when I was away and the girls had been out on a walk, would say to them on their return "O I have had a visit from Miss Sally Baxter!"

This is Sunday. We go to Church when we are abroad but yesterday we met the clergyman at the table d'hôte and he was so awfully pompous, grandiloquent and stupid that I could n't go to hear him sermonize. We may go towards England tomorrow, or to Munich—I never know. I have no will of my own and don't care to have one when there is no call for it. I think about

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you constantly and very very very kindly—and of all of you. Why does everybody else bore me, the great world & all, and why do I feel so at home always in that Brown House? God bless all there: and never for a moment go for to doubt that I am your affectionate old friend.

W. M. T.

Berne, August 7

XXIV

September 27, 1853

I CANT hope to answer all three kind letters to-day, my dear Mrs. Baxter, but Mamma ought to have a word of thanks & acknowledgement, and here it is written at the last hour as usual from the haunt of myself and other old fogies who are beginning to people the place again with their old white heads and pink faces. We get rosy about the gills in this country with old age, whereas in your country old gentlefolks take—another colour. Poor Sarah writes me a long nice kind dismal letter confirming your melancholy accounts of her—She says she looks old and withered and all her beauty is gone—

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My dear I should like very much to see. I met M. yesterday who asked have I heard from N. Y. and is Sarah going to be married? and he laughed. But he came very eagerly across the street after me and I am not so silly as to suppose it was to know about *my* health he passed the crossing. H. inherits a great property by his father's death. I forget how much Sturgis said, but something like 15,000£ a year, and B. no doubt comes in for a handsome portion. But I have said my say that I would rather see your young woman located in a wigwam than mistress of a house in May Fair where no love was —and dont think I should ever forgive her if she married B. How sorry I am I did n't see young B.—and Libbie, has not Libby a young man? I feel like a sort of great-grand-uncle to all those girls.

We I and mine have just been into the city buying things for our trip to France and Italy—plated forks and spoons—not liking to take our valuable and ancient plate. Next year at this time or when the equinoxious gales are over (they

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have been blowing hurricanes these 3 days) shall we be thinking of crossing to America? Who knows what Fate has in store for us between this and then? I am awaiting the end of this day with a queer sort of feeling—this day week I dreamed I met an uncle of mine whom I had not seen for a long time, and after talking about America together I agreed to dine with him today. Now my uncle has been dead these 12 years and if I dine with him? It would be a funny dream if it came true and what a paragraph it wd make in the paper! I have just sent the girls home in a Hansom Cab to their huge delight, and stop on the way to scribble this twopenny gossip to New York. . . . What would life be without grumbling? I trust my dear friend that if you know me for a hundred years to come you will never find me otherwise than good-natured & discontented. I have been twice to look for the friend who is to advise me about your husband's law suit but he is not forthcoming—all the lawyers are away just now. The girls and I are just come from my law-chambers, in Lamb

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Court opposite Messrs. Warrington & Pendennis who are as real barristers as I am. Events in Europe look so very glumly that I doubt if we shall get to Italy. There is going to be a great quarrel with Tuscany apropos of their putting this young tract and Bible distributor into prison—We have a grudge against the Pope, a grudge against the Austrians, a war perhaps with Russia at this moment—the Lord deliver us well out of these possible and probable evils —but if that last inevitable tremendous war wh: must come some day should begin tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 or any other time or day I should n't be surprised; and my daughters must come out and live on the S. Michigan Railway.

This twaddle and slipslop might find its way into the fire instead of the bag of the Hermann tomorrow (I see the great white bags flumped down on the deck) but if it tells nothing else it tells of affection and kind memory of dear friends which please God I shall always keep as long as my name is so and so. One walks straight away from this busy world back into yours and I see the old room and sit in the yellow arm

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chair and taſte the old welcome dinner and wine, and look at the girls and Wylly quite quiet by his father and hear a wonderful remark from George. God bleſs them all says yours, dear Mrs. Baxter, moſt sincerely

W. M. T.

AND Mrs. Snelling, juſt let us run across the avenue and say How do you do Mrs. Snelling? How do you do all & good bye.

XXV

Maison Valin, Champs Elysees
3 November, 1853

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: I have been a long time without sending de nos nouvelles to the Brown House. What with pleasure business many relatives I am scarce maſter of my own time here. Now I muſt walk with the children, now I muſt go and see my old parents, now the sun shines so provokingly that its impossible to remain at home—so the day passes, and old friends do not get their proper share of it. It has been a busy month since we arrived here—on

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4 October I see by Sarah's little pocket-book—wh gives me many a recollection dismal and pleasant—There is Jan 18, Philadelphia, Lecture III. I remember the people were all kept waiting whilst I finished certain rhymes to "born." There 's New York, April 15 and on that day the only entry is Lu. What can that mean? and 5 days after comes "Left New York by Europa" and then England & then Paris & then Germany & Switzerland, and England and Paris again—Soon it will be Rome most probably. What a number of places and agitation of life! I begin to feel most tranquillity of mind in a railway carriage now; and retirement in an inn. Certainly here the place does n't favor industry—Anny & I have been only able to compose one number of the Newcomes all this month—I 'm leaving off writing now altogether—and have sat many a day for hours with the paper before me and not been able to invent 6 lines. Is n't this paper abominable? I have no other. Miss Anny in her great handwriting has used up all the good paper for the Newcomes. I wish there were reams of it so covered. . . . And now I am at

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an end of this blotting paper: and my dear Mrs. Baxter's affectionate friend always

W. M. T.

OFF to Paris tomorrow then to Rome.

XXVI

18 *November*, 1853

MY DEAR BAXTER. My friend Mr. S. Lawrence is the bearer of this, and I know you will all be kind to him for the sake of the lovely youth whose picture he painted and who is Yours

W. M. T.

How well Lawrence would draw you! My dear Mrs. Baxter, you must insist upon having your husband's head taken off—and you young ladies do your utmost to make the good little painter happy. He has an immense family, is one of the best of creatures, and O how I wish I was going to see the faces and hear the voices which he will see.

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Paris, Nov., 1853

AS Miss Sarah is only to have one side of paper, we must have recourse to the tight upright hand, and you will see Miss, by counting the letters that you have quite as much as you send me. I have been writing to your mother and the girls until I feel quite New York sick. There 's no merit in liking you—no more than in liking peaches or pickled walnuts—its because I cant help myself you see, I daresay I 've told you so a thousand times over. Every honest man repeats himself continually. If a man does not, be on your guard against him, as he is on himself. Three days ago dining with my Aunt I thought this day 12 months I was coasting Wales on my way out to America, and I filled a glass, Miss, & drank to some people's health silently swallowing the wine & sentiment. I think when I come back to New York I shan't come and see you any more. It would be the best way, depend on it. We have had such a good time Wir haben uns alle so Lieb that we shall never be able to beat it. You won't like

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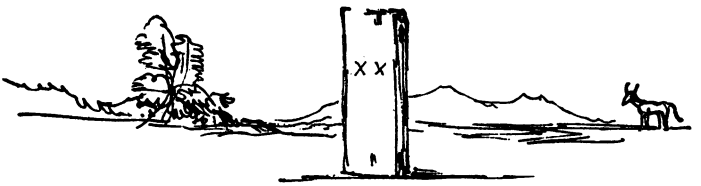
me with my hair dyed I know and I have grown so fat it is quite awful—then you write that you are so old and changed! At thine age, friendess, that conceives itself well. At twenty years one is no longer young in your climates, and when one has had so much of griefs!



SKETCH BY THACKERAY FOR MISS SARAH BAXTER'S BIRTHDAY, REPRESENTING THE TWENTIETH MILESTONE ON THE ROAD OF LIFE, WITH THE ARTIST IN THE DISTANCE

What is it that makes you miserable? I wish I could hear. On a certain subject you told me I was not to write to you. It 's that one I suppose. Now that I am thousands of miles away from them, I opine that the tears of twenty years dry up very quickly. . . . A girl I was very fond of asked me once for advice about a matrimonial matter, and whether she should take an old gentleman whom she only esteemed, and I gave her what do you think for advice?—None: that's

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a case in wh no doctor can prescribe & the patient only can determine. She ended by marrying another man whom she esteemed and they have children of course and I believe they are very happy as times go—But what idle talking! each case is different from every other.

I think I have nothing to tell you, and this is a very stupid letter. Last week I went to a ball given by the young men of our Embassy to all sorts of wonderful people of the Theatres, Operas &c—the &c is awful—Such toilettes, such dancing! such wicked, happy, careless, beautiful folks! It was curious to see them; & I am glad I went —It was for the first time in my life that I saw the thing, which was as correct as one of your balls or ours for all I could see—& the women, O the beautiful dresses and daring gaiety! Corbin had a dinner the same day of heavy American and British company, from wh I went to the young men's party. And I have given some restaurateur-feasts myself wh have been tolerably pleasant having a notion to make Punch pay for them by a series of Gastronomic articles—and I have been racketting about as usual: getting

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now and then a day to myself away from fashionable gossip from family gossip qui n'est guére moins supportable: and I have had some capital days and walks with my girls the sight of whose happiness makes me happy. Shall I write you a pleasanter letter soon? next week? tomorrow? This is not one—only to see that I am

Yours sincerely always

W. M. T.

THIS is a postscript written in a hurry—to pray your good father not to mind the awful price of this letter wh it is too late to pay it wh it is written in the office of a newspaper correspondent with 6 people talking round about. I have just come out of the height of good society, Lady Cowley, Lady Sandwich, Lady Waldegrave, Lord Bath and here 's quite another set, and a pleasanter perhaps—C. C. Clifford is related to the Duke of Devonshire—with the bar sinister, a very worthy good young man. I dont know Lefevre—the Speaker's son I suppose—I did n't see Hatty. I only care for Hatty "on fire" and a few, very few more. . . . I wish I was

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where this letter is a going. It was n't worth while to keep the letter open for these fadaises, was it? What compliments you have got to paying me of late!—I went and got your last letter and read it over before I came out. Hence all these little remarks. I had quite forgotten the compliments: but not you Mademoiselle whose gift pocket-book is very near full now, & the year run over & a deal of care and pleasure with it. Farewell and God bless you all. Write me soon; if directly I shall have the letter before I go to Rome—where and elsewhere I shall always remember S. S. B. . . . Ajew. Ajew. . . .

XXVII

1853

OUR next move is a mystery though—whether it shall be Switzerland or Devonshire or where. Then it is probable I shall pass October & November in Paris, and the winter—why, suppose we say Rome for the winter? It sounds a pleasant life, don't it Madam? But I 'm so doubtful as never to count upon the month before me; and have seen too much of

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the weary old world to look for any especial degree of pleasure in any particular corner of it. I was saying to the girls yesterday, Suppose we go & write the book at Saratoga Springs? but you see that would make us too common and do away with the novelty agin the lecture season in 1854; when Lucy will be married and Libby engaged and Sarah—ah where will Sarah be? I saw one of my ex-loves yesterday with 2 pretty babies, very happy handsome & friendly. —I am twaddling—it is before breakfast. It is not good to write before breakfast. Now I daresay there is an American letter for me at my house at London—go and get thy breakfast.

Thursday June 30

SINCE this your letter has come to my mother and I 'm very sorry indeed to hear of your illness; and I 'm in a hurry to save the post having been out with the children unexpectedly till now & on Wednesday we go for the Rhine & Switzerland, I believe, & wherever I am I am always the B. H.'s

Affectionately, W. M. T.

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XXVIII

DIRECT care of Macbeau. Banquier
Via del Corso. à Rome

Via della Croce 81 *Rome*
Saturday 17 *Dec*r 1853

JUST as we were leaving Paris, ever so long ago, on the 28 of November I think, I got a letter from my dear Mrs. Baxter, with a line of postscript from poor S. S. B. who could write no more having been ill in her bed for many long days—And ever since then I have been so hustled and hurried that I have not had time for a letter to my friends in the sunset—though the very first day I saw him setting behind St. Peter's you may be sure I thought of you, and sent a many kind wishes across the intervening space (here I try to fancy it to myself in a map) which I hope fluttered into a Second Avenue window and found all well there. That last letter of Mrs. Baxter's was very disheartening though. I fancy care worn faces at the brown house. It seems to me awfully distant. I fear that confounded line about "Mr. Washington" has done

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me a world of mischief in the States, for though English and French laugh when they read it,—there 's no use explaining & apologizing to an angry half-educated man—and, ah me! the other 10,000 dollars I counted upon are I fear knocked into nothing by that unlucky blunder.

What shall I tell you about Rome? We are here a fortnight—and the man who travels without a governess and with 2 daughters finds himself pretty much the tall confidential old family servant of the young ladies. Not one word of writing have I done as yet, and to be sure have been ill for the last 4 days; with an attack of—well of leeches, blisters, calomel. I have been ill once a month for the last 5 months. I who never was ill in *our* country. Miss Sarah, I have had brednwater for four days, and am pretty better thank you; and am so glad I brought my servant with me contrary to the dictates of common sense & economy. Beside him we have an Eyetalian old woman, with whom we blunder on amusingly, and for lodgings some of the very handsomest & comfortablest rooms in all Rome. We came by Lyons & the Rhone to Avignon

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and Marseilles, a dreary journey through frost and snow, in steamers O how unlike *our* steamers! had a jolly passage by Genoa & Leghorn to Civita Vecchia, kilt a postillion on the road to Rome, and missed being robbed only by a day; the next day people were stopped and my girls were quite disappointed at our not enjoying the adventure. I had a hundred louis with me which would have made it much more piquante.

Do you see that I have a new ruby pen wh does not write well? It is capital for this hand when I sit up, but not for this when I lie down, the posture I am forced to keep by the Doctor. Such a dirty, peevish Irish Doctor! as he felt my pulse last night I felt Miss Smith (of Washington D. C.) was not right and that all Englishmen do not "keep their nails well." He lives in the house though, has few other patients, and is very eager about this one. How I should like to smoke a cigar! I would if I could get one of Uncle Oliver's little ones—but here they are so coarse and so big.—This is most awful. The girls are sitting before me, and I was trying to draw them but the pen and the perspective & the

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pulse last night I felt Miss Smith (of Washington P.C.) was not right and that all Englishmen do not "keep their nails well". He lives in the house though, has few other patients; and is very eager about this one. How I should like to smoke a cigar! I would if I could get one of Uncle Oliver's little ones - but here they are so coarse and so big. — This is most awful. The girls are sitting before me, and

I was trying to draw them but the pen and the perspective & the clumsiness & position of the artist don't admit of doing it

FACSIMILE OF A PART OF THACKERAY'S LETTER OF DECEMBER 17, 1853

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clumsiness & position of the artiſt don't admit of doing it.

I have seen none of the Roman Americans but Mr. Van Buren—the poor Storys are here in great grief having juſt loſt their child, and I hear from your side that my poor friend Mrs. Lowell is no more. How, after one knows the world and has been in action for a few years, they do drop round about one! I read the death of some one I know in every paper almoſt—to-day it was a little (only) child I saw at Paris a month since, the darling of its mother's eyes—Here breaks in a controversy about "Zanoni," Anny all enthusiasm, Minny as usual taking matters coolly —Well, though I have written nothing, I have had a capital time with the girls. They are capital. It makes me happy to see them so. I was thinking the other day that this was or ought to be the happieſt of all my life—and these illnesses dont make it worse—rather better. The girls are so good, they wont be alarmed, they show me their bonny faces once or twice a day —that is they did; now I 'm well again. I beg pardon for prattling to you so much about—

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about what a man knows and talks of best I 've heard Miss S. S. B. say.

Cant we find any plan of healing that absurd "Mr. Washington" feud? I feel myself shocked and pained by it as if some dear friend had turned round to abuse me; I who for once in my life kept my own council; who have got to consider yours as my country almost; who have praised the States so outrageously since I came home, & made myself such a violent partizan—How dare people think I could be guilty of such stupid abuse as that they attribute to me? I who love and honor Washington as I love and honour no other man? —"It serves you right" a man said to me in London, You see what good you have got by praising the States—O it puts me in a rage!

I must send this from some postal mystery without an envelope, and shorten this rambling scrawl so far—I know you 'll be as kind to Lawrence as you can, his is a real talent, and had it been ever so little less honest must have met a great success. I am sure his chalk drawings of men are of the very highest order. Please Uncle Oliver introduce him to the Centurions—though

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he is not a jolly bird, like some of those legionaries—I wish I was going to see 'em again—What makes me so fond of you all in that city? I know I write this over and over again; as one says how do you do and God bless you over again to friends one loves as &c &c to whom I send a kind greeting and a happy Xmas & many & many a happy N. Y. Where was the last Xmas spent? I have written down in the commencement of the little pocket book all places I have lived in since—such a catalogue!—I never like to shut up when I 'm writing to any of you but come back for a last good bye & God bless you.

W. M. T.

XXIX

Naples. Sometime in March—
28th the last day, 1854

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: I am paying off debts of friendship as time serves, and now I think comes the turn of my dear friends in New York, to whom my thoughts often go if my letters don't. I have such hard work now that letter-writing becomes difficult to me; and such

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a number of cares and troubles encompassing me that the letters when I do write are perforce the most gloomy comfortless scraps of paper. What did Sarah's last sad letter mean, and what ails my bright S. S. B.? She wrote as if she had quite a serious malady—full of affection for the kindest parents in the world, but of dismal forebodings for herself ill or well. As for me I have been ill ever since I have been in Italy—twice at Rome: as often since we have been here: and travelling without a female servant for my girls I have had them both ill with the scarlatina—Anny first, then Minny a week after: then I took ill on my own account: and we were all three, 10 days since, stretched on our backs looking out at the Mediterranean yonder—so provokingly bright and blue. As soon as ever I'm well, I fall to work again: to keep up my 4 numbers ahead. The care and anxiety are constant you see. God grant that you have gone through your share for poor Sarah, and that she and the Spring are come out together. I've scarcely been out of doors for weeks past: and have had little heart to enjoy things when I went out.

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Am I not fulfilling my promise of a dismal letter? Thank God my girls are both up now and well—Anny who has been the longest convalescent, taking sweet kind care of her younger sister. Minny during Anny's fever was a fine little nurse: and when we were all on our beds we by the best of good luck got an excellent Irish nurse, who took care of poor little No. 2 when her turn came. This Italy has been a failure. I start off from one glum topic to another. I don't like the accounts of your constant headaches: nor the report that the last year has n't been a good one for your husband. He must n't mind my not writing to him. I don't to any man except on business (and neglect that dreadfully too). I wish you and he and Sarah and Lucy would come over to us at Kensington. I wish we were there. I must get back and to read for the new lectures; though I despond about them rather; and feel about 20 years older than when I saw you.

I was right, was n't I, to shut up my portfolio two days ago, and take my hat and go out. The blue devils were growing too blue—bluer than the sea out of window and that 's glorious to look

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upon. Do you know what this is? This is the island of Capri right opposite my window. It is as purple—as purple as the pelisse Miss Baxter used to wear this time last year—and there are 1, 2, 3 little ships dotting the sea line, and the blue ocean seems swelling over, gently dancing landward as if it would hop into my windows. Night and morning come musicians with song and roundelay. O my stars how sick I am of their noise! They have bawled it under my windows and spoiled my work: they have bawled it and spoiled my girls' sleep. There comes one of them now, the villain! (I am trying to restore my good humour by drawing those little waves between the lines.) If it had not been for a nonsensical Xmas book I have been writing I dont know what I should have done in these last dreary weeks. How much men make of a little confinement! (not your husband that pearl of papas and husbands) but selfish people like your humble servant—And how kindly and simply women bear it! What! Shall I go on writing this ejaculatory sort of sentiment. I have nothing else to say, see no one, remark nothing, take Anny

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out, read the newspaper for relaxation, work all the morning at No. XI when health permits—might as well be at Brompton as here—I think I'll wait for another day, and stop again.

When was the above written? Ever so many days ago. Now No. 2 goes out as well as No. 1, and soon I hope we shall be able to leave this ill-starred country, and get to Paris and London. Times are going a little more pleasantly. The children have their dinner, with huge appetites thank Heaven, at 1. Then we go out. Then I go and dine with my friends. It is a comfort to get out of the wearisome sickroom for a while, and have a holyday.

March 28

Now I begin for the fourth time—And this shall go on to the end of the page or sure it will never be done. Well then, this is to go by a quick boat to Marseilles and thence swiftly to London and thence to Liverpool, and it will reach you about the 15 April won't it—which I remember very well though it seems a hundred years ago—and Crowe bringing me the sham flowers; and the party in the Brown House yon-

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der—dear old friendly Brown House—and Miss Clark's marriage-day that fatal day and Miss Lucy crying, and Miss Sarah tripping away to her coach, and the tea afterwards and ever so many thoughts pleasant and dismal. Write to me, to Young Street, Kensington, by the very first ship please. Tell me good news of every one. Shall I come and see you in the fall? Can't you coax Felt on the part of his Societies to make me an offer? You and Mrs. Snelling might take him in hand showing how popular the series of lectures which I intend would surely be. Men of the world! Chesterfield, Wharton, Walpole, Brummell, what fun and satire! what an opportunity for young men to learn about Euroapian manners! Depend on it the ladies would be the best negociators in this matter: and I would sooner have your help than the smartest man in Wall Street.—I do feel 20 years older than when I was in America: and 3 months of ill health and gloom in this charming climate have made me about 70. I used to have some reminiscences and feelings of youth left when I was 42, now I am near 43 and no grand-

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father can be more glum. I sleep like a monk with a death's head in my room! "Come," says the cheerful monitor, "rouse yourself, Finish Newcomes—Get a few thousand pounds more, my man, for those daughters of yours—For your time is short, and the sexton wants you. You have been in this world long enough. You have had enough champagne and feasting—travelling, novel-reading, novel-writing, yawning, grumbling, falling in love and the like. You are too old for these amusements and what other occupation are you fit for? Get 200£ a year apiece for your girls and their poor mother, and then come to me!" So be it. Is n't it a cheerful letter? The other day at dinner, my neighbour (with a certain twang in her pretty nose by wh I recognized my beloved Republic) says to her neighbour—"Do you know Howadji? He's going to be married to Miss (I forget) of Boston." Is this true? Give the swain my compliments—I wish I could take them to him to the Century tomorrow night. Yesterday I was the only Englishman at the table d'hôte. 5 French, 4 Germans, 24 Americans—and amongst them, ah such loafers! Our nations

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did not mingle in the leaſt in Rome, nor do they here. I made friends with the Storys, poor people, they had juſt loſt their son, and the laſt I hear of them is that they have had to stop between this and Rome in a town close on the Pontine marshes with their remaining child struck down by a fever which she has had for 4 months paſt. It has been an awful season for illness here —Here I am, growing lively again! The paper will not hold much more grumbling and moping, but there's space enough left to tell you my dear friend how affectionately I remember you all, and how sincerely I am yours.

W. M. T.

WHAT a comfort to think the next letter will be straight to Kensington about 1 May!

XXX

36 Onslow Square, Brompton
May 18, 1854

NOW it is Miss Lucy's turn to have a little note. Miss Lucy's turn indeed? It is a mile and three days off her birthday when she

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ought to have had one, and do you call this fag end Miss Lucy's turn? B. would n't go on in this way, or would go off very quickly if he did —Well—but the truth is my dear (Dont you frown, and clench your hands and stamp so) the truth is this very day I have written 14 notes on business—No not 14—13—(One was to Misses A. & M. Thackeray telling them to come to Boulogne from Paris on Sunday wᵉ their Papa would be in waiting there to fetch them) but the rest were all about other people's business almost because you see this is the first day I have got into the new house, and there is ever so much to write about, and anything more dismally uncomfortable than the new house, of wʰ only 2 rooms are ready as yet, mortal man cant conc— I wont go on with this sentence wʰ is n't true: the fact is there are 50000 houses about London a great deal more uncomfortable.

I wonder whether the pickles and peaches directed to Young St. (where I 've left no servant) and about wʰ your dear mother writes me word in her letter just received, will find their way from Kensington to Brompton? I feel some-

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how as if they were going to escape me and that the rogues to whom they are entrusted will take advantage of the change of residence and confiscate my edibles. They dont know how I value 'em and that there are no peaches in all the world so good as those in my eyes. And so Sarah has increased 20 lb in weight and looks ever so handsome again! Here comes a ring of the bell on which perhaps my future life depends.

Who do you think it was?—It was a Governess & Companion—and there came in such a simpering ogling sighing sentimental spinster that at the end of 1-2 an hour's silly conversation I was glad to get rid of her. To console her I told her I was afraid she was too handsome: that did n't seem to strike her so I tried her in French in which she made such an awful igsposure of herself, that the poor thing saw it was all over and curtsied out of the room. Ah poor thing! there she has come 5 miles in her new gown, new bonnet, best shawl to find a glum middle aged gentleman smoking a cigar and to get her congé—I must take the German lady, thats the end of it. Did I write you about the Ger-

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man lady? In the governess hunt t' other day I lighted upon a school called a German college for ladies, so nice, neat, pretty, well ordained, with such a nice mistress over it that had I known of it 2 years since my girls should have gone there during my trip to a certain country and by this time would have spoken German, known history, and every kind of ology, and been perfectly accomplished instead of being utterly ignorant as they are now of everything except one thing, the art and science of loving their old father. I know 2 young ladies in New York who have that accomplishment too—who love *their* father I mean, and my girls' father too for the matter of that—dont they a little?

What rambling rubbish this is! Do you know why I go on writing it though it is 7:30 o'clock; though I know its stupid; though I am as ungry as an unter on the ills—why, because tomorrow morning early I start for Boulogne: tonight I must go for the first time this season into the bo mondy Lady Ashburton & Lady Granville and if I dont write now that debt I owe my dear kind Lucy Baxter will be left over for 10

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days certain & perhaps 20 days uncertain. I wish all my other debts were paid. But O the upholsterers, the carpeters, the fenderers the looking glass people, on coming into a new house! —O their bills their bills!

So I will shut up my letter—and I give my hearty good love to all of you to the old folks and to S., L., W., G., L., O and to Mrs. Sn-ll-ng and her family, and my best remembrances to any one who recollects

Your afft old friend

W. M. THACKERAY

XXXI

August 3, 1855

MY DEAR KIND MRS. BAXTER: I have only one minute to write and thank you for your offer; but we have debated, the girls and I, and agreed with very heavy hearts that it is best they stay behind and take care of Granny and Colonel Newcome.

My passage is taken for the 13th—How glad I shall be if that little arrangement I proposed when I wrote from Paris of a meet at Boston

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and a visit to Niagara could come off! But what comes of my letters? I am sure more than two or three must have been lost.

I bring out a good natured, good looking simple lad, son of my neighbour Baron Marochetti —I saw him 2 days ago standing on his door step and said out of window "Maurice, will you come to America with me?" and it was agreed instanter. He is very good looking, and will dance at the balls.

It is hard to part, but O it will be very happy to see you all!

W. M. T.

XXXII

36 Onslow Sq., Brompton
Friday, October 5, 1855

MY DEAR FRIENDS: What a ninny I was to order you to Boston. Do you know I thought Boston was much nearer Buffalo than your village is; and that is why I asked you to meet me. How kind it was of you to say you 'd come! But for the satisfaction of seeing you a day or two sooner, I must n't bring you hun-

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dreds of miles out of your way. I shall see your faces or your letter at the Tremont House at Boston, shan't I? I have done George I, II, III and can afford a day or two at Niagara. I shake you all by the hand. I give the girls fair warning of what I intend to do when I see them. I wish I was taking my own dear women along with me but we have debated the matter many a time, and they agree it is best to remain with their Granny. God bless all sick persons, young children, all travellers by land or by water. Tell Putnam to keep a nice room and one for my secretary—Wylly will be a good friend for him —and so farewell, till D V we meet.

W. M. T.

XXXIII

November, 1855

HOW are you all? I have been at work all day till this minute—and should so like to come to dinner. But had n't I better after dinner here now—come up stairs and reread George I? Yes indeed—& so God bless you all is all I send by way of good morrow.

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XXXIV

Tremont, 11 *Dec'r*, 1855

MY DEAR FRIEND. I feel as if I was doing wrong though I am doing right. I lay awake for hours that night when Baxter said he wished me to come to N. Y. for tomorrow, & thought of your kindness & regard and that I ought & would do anything to please you. But an engagement was made for me here for Wednesday evening, another on Thursday. Ought a man with a chill and fever on him to break a contract, travel 9 hours and 9 hours next day to see a pretty lass made happy? You would be more angry if I were ill than I should be myself; and I think the chances were against my well-ness if I had done those 2 journies—After four hours I am feverish, anxious, and obliged to lie down. No. My duty was to stay away. I heartily pray God bless Sarah and make her happy. I heard such a fine character of her husband from Mrs. P. yesterday. *She* Mrs. P. was so changed, improved, *happy*fied by her marriage that it did one good to see her. May your girl

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be so too. I know your heart and time are full and send only a shake of the hand and the kindest, kindest wishes for you all from W. M. T.

MY DEAR SARAH. I must not come; but say with all my heart God bless you and your husband. I hope he will be my friend and that I always may be

Affectionately yours

W. M. THACKERAY

XXXV

Tremont, Saturday
15 Dec', 1855

MY DEAR MR. BAXTER: I think you will be pleased to hear that on *the* Wednesday I got a fine attack of spasms, (part of which I was obliged to bear grinning through the compliments of a Quaker family.)—that they came on much worse in the night, & that I was in bed all yesterday in considerable pain having to put off my lecture at Providence.

Now suppose I had got this attack on Wednesday at New York? I should have lost that night's lecture—Thursday's, Friday's & Satur-

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day's (for I 'm so weak now that I can scarce see the paper, & you see its a very different thing being carried 5 minutes in a coach to a lecture room, & having to travel 9 hours before getting to it)—and then how annoyed Baxter would have been that I should have lost 4 days and the proceeds thereof for the sake of a ceremony which I would as soon see as see one of my children have a tooth out! It was a comfort to me when I was hit, to think of this and to sigh out "Well, now Baxter will see I was right." Is that fatal day well over? are the tears dried, and has the pretty bride left you? I dont know that I want to know about it. What a blow it must have been to you two!—to the father especially—I am certain I shall never quite forgive my daughters for marrying—a very reprehensible sentiment—did not you fall in love? did not you marry?—is it not written that a woman shall leave all and follow &c? yes—this is very well, but we retain our opinions, at least I do. And so now it is done and done, I don't intend quite to forgive Sarah—It is the highest compliment that I can pay her. . . .

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At last I have letters from the girls, with 2 more from that postmaster at Paris who can send *his* letters, confound him, unpaid though not the children's. They are happy—pretty well—busy—going out quite enough—Old GC and Granny doing their best to make their old house pleasant to those young ones—I wonder whether I shall suddenly rush back upon them as on a former occasion? T' other day I got an anonymous letter containing a newspaper article having the author's own ribaldry—Good God, thinks I, why put myself in a position to suffer this kind of thing? What amount of dollars can compensate a man for this insult? To be sure I have had anonymous letters at home. It is as well that I stopped this maundering letter here yesterday—continued to be unwell all day and all night—certainly could not have lectured last night or tonight had my illness befallen at New York—so we must console ourselves once more for an absence which renders no one inconsolable. This is nonsense—my head is so weak that I can hardly write sense—I can read though and enjoy the egotism of quiet—have been reading

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the Life of Goethe, the old rogue who at 75 had a deep passion for a girl and was severely wounded—the girl "was sent back to school."

If you could see me now you would see me feeling a deep passion because I can't get a pen to write nor paper to suit me, not smooth paper, nor rough, nor gold pen, nor quill. When we are ill what selfish drivellers some of us men are! This was to be all about you, about Sarah, about the marriage, about poor Lucy's grief—and its all about me and my little twopenny aches and pains. Never mind, your heart on your side is so unreasonably soft that you (there! it wont work though its mended!) that if I tell you I am unwell you will straightway begin to forget your own woes and so I do a little good by writing. But write me about matters please. O my! what twinges I had yesterday as I was lecturing! No one would have thought from the sweet serenity of my countenance what hagonies were going on within!

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XXXVI

Gilmore House, Baltimore
Friday, Jan 11, 1856

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: The welcome handwriting found me at Philadelphia; and now it is Baltimore and 6 days later. We assemble very meagre audiences at Baltimore. The Opera Company has chosen my nights; and, small blame to them, the pretty girls of B. prefer the greater attraction—I am pleased with the anger of my *Felt* here, Mr. Bradenbaugh, that our room should be 1-2 full, and our audience away to the other entertainment. They are 100 in their company; wanting bread many of them, and shall I be angry, because they take a little of the butter off my enormous loaf? The bitter weather too fights against us. So it did at Philadelphia; nevertheless we did very well there, and the last audience was proh-digious. I have not been very well, and in these fits become exceedingly glum and the thoughts of rushing home at such times overpoweringly strong. But one goes home and lo the blue devils salute you

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on the other side of the water! I found excellent company, kindness, and hospitality at Philadelphia—the same to a minor extent here—That going out to suppers after lecture, when one is tired, sick, hating society and longing to go to bed, is awful. Twice I spoke last night to the very pretty lady of the house—once about terrapins, that they were good; once about the old china—that was all. Why did she ask me? what will she not think about the conversation of these literary men? Yet her husband would have been sadly disappointed if I had not gone. I wish I could do kind acts with a good grace—These are my news. I have read Macaulay Vol. III.—it did not amuse me so much as Prescott, or near so much as the first 2 volumes. He has been sick too; his hand is more languid than in the first part of the work.

I thought I saw death in that poor boy's face the day I dined with the good S's—A melancholy appealing look in his eyes scared me—and now they are closed and the end come for him. Their loving hearts will be awfully wounded. Before these griefs one can't say anything—

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Take off your hat and let the funeral pass—God help the mourners. It is the knowing a few good folks like these, that makes me love this country of yours. Why should you not go to Boston for a while, and break down those fevers of your dear children? About Young's country of Riverdale they are unknown; but there good doctors of course are not at hand. Some time—a good bit hence—I shall write to that lady you speak of—but now I can't, there 's a something between us—I might sit with her for hours alone, and should not be able to open my mouth—any more than to the lady of the terrapins last night. When my girls do that inevitable, natural, righteous thing—I know it will take me years to be reconciled to it— . . . we must take each other and ourselves with our peculiarities—about wh there is no reasoning, and wh there 's no changing. . . . I have been chewing the cud since I wrote this; and turned the pages, and laboriously put in stops, crossed the t's, and dotted the i's—I began to take a liking to a very nice woman at Philadelphia, widow of poor Henry Reed lost in the Arctic—sad, plaintive, gentle, sensi-

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ble, sensitive—and there 's another there Mrs. Neilson, as bright as sunshine—with a brave old father (Lewis) immensely sympathetic to me. Here is Bradenbaugh a clever man—rough diamond—Mr. Wallace a very elegant scholar and gentleman, Mr. J. P. Kennedy, exceedingly pleasant, natural and good-natured; and he has introduced me to a club—O Gods such a dreary club! such a desperate dinner! such a stupid man that *would* talk! What rubbish is this to fill sheets with?—I send you all a hearty greeting and to the S's my very best regards—I don't know what I am going to do next. Have made no plans—Am I going South or no? Good bye my dear friend, and hail all at the B. H. and its master. I am always yours

W. M. T.

XXXVII

Savannah, 17 *Feb*, 1856

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: A little note from Lucy at Charleston reached me last night, and told me what I was very sorry but not surprised to hear that in the midst of all your watch-

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ings and cares and nursings you had fallen ill too—surely there must be some malaria hanging round that Second Avenue corner, and you should all move away for a season at least and get into a wholesomer air. How well your girls (*our* girls they almost seem to me) looked at Charleston! Sally in her blue dress and lace—the 10,000$ worth wh I gave her and the 10,000,000 wh her father gave her—looked as handsome as a fairy Princess going to the ball. I liked her husband more thoroughly every day I saw him. I thought her Papa-in-law a fine courteous old gentleman—and his daughter-in-law happy, improved, bearing her new name and station with a great deal of good sense and cheerful graciousness; and as for Lucy, I must tell you that there was a very strong Lucy party in Charleston, and that all of us young fellows agreed in admiring her looks (wh I fear is the first thing we young rogues think of) and her sweet natural manners which win everybody. F. H. & I got on by feeling and expressing a fellow-loathing for a certain person whose name I daresay you can guess. And yet vulgar

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as that Individual is I rather like h— bless me I was going to mention the individual's sex!— and am glad that Sarah should be kind to the party in question. I write only petty rubbish— I have nothing to say. The wearisome lecturing business goes on, the little heaps of dollars roll in gently, and every week makes the girls about 500$ richer; and almost every week brings me in a delightful letter from them. At Baltimore I did not know whether I was going to strike for the West or not and had very nearly done so because Jno Crerar was so pressing. At Richmond I had a pleasant little time a very pleasant little time— Went to the Virginia University in the snow then to Charleston then to, let me see, to Augusta then on here to my friend Low's house delightful for its comfort and quiet and decorated with a pretty little wife and baby since last I was here. And I have a passport for Havannah in my desk and should have gone thither on Tuesday had not money-grabbing chances offered at Macon Columbus probably Montgomery; then Mobile and New Orleans. Then the Mississippi and St. Louis and Cincinnati and who

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knows what other places on my way to New York?—You will have the snow removed by April, won't you? whereabouts please God I shall see Second Avenue again. I see and observe no more and like the life no better than I did; but hold out my hat for the dollars perseveringly, and am determined to go on resolutely singing my dreary old song. Suppose I am stupid and bored, what then? A few months boredom may well be borne for the sake of 2 such good girls as mine. At every place I find kind and pleasant people and am a little melancholy when the time comes to leave them. So let us trudge on till the Summer comes, and the bag is pretty full. You will give very kind remembrances to the Snellings for me. You will and must go out of the Brown House, and set up poor dear little George on his legs again. What a year of trials you have had! It was a comfort to see Lucy smiling and being happy & getting well. Let the house; that is my solemn injunction; and get well all of you. A letter at New Orleans I think would find me—or send one to J. G. King's, who will forward to me that is when I and they know who

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is to be my correspondent in that city. Hark! There come Low and his pretty wife from evening church. I went in the morning, and have so much of lay sermons in the week, that one (occasionally) on the Sabbath suffices. O how I have relished the quiet here though! the snug room, the clean bed, the absence of noise, the hours to one's self—no not quite. Did n't I send 7 letters to England yesterday? Good bye; my very best regards to all. You know that I am affectionately yours

W. M. T.

XXXVIII

Wednesday, May 7, 1856

(*On board the Baltic with the pilot on board.*)

I TRY to write on the last day of a horribly uncomfortable voyage, (I was going into a catalogue of its sicknesses &c but what 's the good?) and to wish you all a farewell and God bless you for which I had n't time or heart as I was leaving New York. The process of saying Good bye you know is horrible to me—as I shook kind hands and walked out of hospitable doors

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at Philadelphia for the last time I felt quite sad and guilty as it were. Where was the need of prolonging these adieux? So Friday 25th as I walked down Broadway seeming very bright, warm and cheery I went with my usual sudden impetus straight to Collins's office and was off the next day before I knew I was gone. So good-bye Brown House (though I've seen but little of it this time and, Bon Dieu, how dismal it looked when I called one day and no one was at home!) Goodbye Mrs. Snelling, goodbye kind friends at Boston—well, if I had stopped, and taken my place for a month before hand and gone the round of farewells, what a hang dog time I should have had! We had a dinner at Houston St. the last evening—what forced jokes, what dreary songs, what deadly lively jollification! But that host of mine, W. D. Robinson, what a good fellow it is! how hospitable how kind and soft hearted!—I know I shall feel America sick ere many years are over, and be for paying you all a visit. Luckily 2 days before I went off I happened to go into Tiffany's, and there saw that pretty little sulky teapot &c—which I thought I could not better

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in England and ordered to be sent as a 12th of December token to S. S. H. God bless her and all her belongings. . . . Next thing I hope to hear is of you making little wee caps &c &c. I am sure you had a fine time in the South—and only 3 nights ago dreamed that Lucy was engaged to an elderly physician there. Is she?

I was to go to Mrs. Snelling one Sunday the last Sunday in N. Y. but was so unwell that I couldn't leave the house—please accept my apologies Mrs. Snelling,—and the week rolled away and on Saturday I had run. There is a letter for my mother in the post now, it only reached Liverpool last night in the *Cambria* which sailed from Boston 3 days before us and does n't contain a word about my home-coming of course—how should it? as I did n't know myself.

I am unwell, have had one of my best attacks on board, have n't been well a single day after the first and am going to lay myself up either in London or Paris, and see if this crazy old hull of mine can be patched up & made seaworthy again. The best thing I can do for the next 3 months is to devote myself to being ill—

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and then we will see what fresh work is to be done—and then we will goon working and being ill and so forth & so forth until—There are 3 yellow-gilled Popish priestlings in the cabin now —They know all about kingdom come & have the keys of heaven in their portmanteaus—yet why did one of 'em faint almost the other night because it blew a little hurrykin? What numbers of gates to heaven have *we* built? and suppose after all there are no walls? But this is a mystery. The Rev'd Osgood, the Rev'd Hawkes, the Rev'd Hughes have the keeping of it—I am come, twaddling in the dark almost—to the end of my page. Good bye and God bless you my dear friend. May your children prosper and the fondest of all mothers on *your* side of the water long be happy with them. I am theirs and yours and Baxter's ever

W. M. T.

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XXXIX

36 Onslow Sqr., Brompton
June 19, 1856

MY DEAR FRIEND: It is a comfort to see your kind hand again, and I like you for not liking me to go away as I did in that sudden natural manner—about ten years ago it seems to me now. But to come away was best. I have done what I threatened, given up all business & pleasure, and am doctoring myself and bettering myself every week I hope. It was quite time, & my Doctor here says that he trembled for me and the risk I ran in going to America. I have had plenty of chill and fever since I returned (don't you see how my hand trembles in writing?) but have had no attack for 3 weeks now, and believe they will diminish as I get cured of my other afflictions. What a bore for my poor Nanny! I have been able to take her to very few parties, and come away at one o'clock from the one or two balls we have been at just when the fun is at its best. She comes off or does n't go at all, quite good-naturedly & says "You know I

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should n't like the balls near so much if I went oftener." She is very much liked and so is little Miss Min thank God—that is amongſt my old fogeyfied set—the men (& women too as she is no beauty) praising her good humour and good manners. Not one word of work has W. M. T. done since he came home, nor will he for a month or so more until his health is better. And I have been able to have no entertainments at home, which annoys me, for there have been some Americans here to whom I should have liked to hold out a hand of fellowship—but what can a fellow do perpetually menaced with chill &c &c? So the quarrel between us is stayed for the present, by the humble pie we have eaten. I would not have eaten it; for that kind of humility never will appease your Anti-English over the water or be underſtood by them. O me! its dreadful to read of these unchriſtian squabbles. I fear I'm not near so good an American as I was after the firſt visit—no doubt all that abuse rankles in my heart, which is very generous I believe but dreadful unforgiving. Ashburton told a friend of mine that "I was as tender as a woman but

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as cruel as Robespierre." I wonder whether it's true? I wonder why I prattle this rubbish to you? I hope you'll see my new friend W. D. Robinson sometimes—such a good jolly soul! Him and you (but very few) of those I know I value true. You don't tell me what I should like to have heard about S. S. H. I broke my vow and went and dined at Sturgis's yesterday, sitting next Chevalier Wykoff's Miss Gamble. I found her a very well behaved, clean looking, nice little oldish body—But I hadn't the heart to go to Mr. Peabody's great feté at the Crystal Palace—which everybody says was the handsomest feast ever seen. You don't mind my writing stupid letters? I pass my days skulking about at clubs away from my family; and growing more silent every day. Charles I fear is spoiled by America. He is discontented with his position and I suspect aspires to be a flunkey in a family of superior rank. The last, the very last, of my loves, Jane Ingilby by name, was married last week, she being 25, to a great lawyer of 6— with 10,000£ a year—and now my emptied heart has only its paternal chambers occupied. What more dull-

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ness can I put in this corner? Only kindest remembrances to 286, and your sister, and sincerest regards from yours ever

W. M. T.

XL

36 Onslow Sq., Brompton, London
12—13 July, 1856

DO you remember this handwriting? Since circumstances have occurred, you have not seen it much. I write to nobody now, that's the fact, except a dozen or two of brief business letters during the week.... Don't you think more of the little personage whose . . . advent has been announced to me than of scores of old friends pleasures & what not? We take up with the business of our lives when the time comes —May your nursery be thronged & merry!

I am writing on my back, rather ill in bed. Have been ill ever since I came home, forced to give up the pomps & vanities of this wicked world and all the sinful lusts of the season— am greatly better though, and fancy that I am going to be better still. All that melancholy you

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remember, that glum carelessness of life, &c came from bodily ailment and not mental, as we used romantically to fancy. I am greatly improved

A PEN SKETCH BY THACKERAY
AMONG THE BAXTER SOUVENIRS OF THE NOVELIST

of my ailment and with the illness the melancholy goes—next year I shall be as jolly as 20—perfectly reconciled to life—interested even in trivialities let us hope—trumps, politics, what there is for dinner, or what our neighbour has—I have been 2½ months in London now without doing the littlest bit of work except doctoring myself. Poor Anny has lost her season and

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we have been able to go but to 2 fine parties—I had an ague attack after both so that she is reconciled to staying away. . . . And that I seriously think is all my news. I am dead: go nowhere, do, think, write, nothing. Shall I not best burn this letter instead of sending it all the way to the Second Avenue?

Shall I ever come back to you again? Not as a public performer. I won't go through the degrading ordeal of press abuse again. Those scoundrels managed last time to offend and insult the most friendly stranger that ever entered your country or quitted it—I like my dear old friends just as well as ever, mind you—but the public *non pas*.

At this juncture yesterday the Dr made his appearance; and now it is Sunday morning 13 July, and though it's only 10 o'clock I have had my breakfast these 3 hours, and read 3 papers, and 3 pamphlets about the Prince of Wales (my favorite George IV) and what on earth have I got to say to fill up these 2 pages? The George lectures are much better liked here than they were with you that is if I may judge from a petit comité to whom I have read 3 of them—The ter-

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rible Venables came to the first and Minny of whose criticism I am more afraid than of any one's—V spoke very highly of No. 1. Old Lady Morley cried at No. 3— Ld Morley who belonged to the Court was not in the least scandalized—it was evident in a word that the people were amused. I read the lectures straight out from the American M.S. w^h your people said I should not dare to read in England, & should have given them in public but that I was not sure of my health, and thought the best thing I could do was to go into hospital. I am now all but set up again: and when we're well Laud! wont we be happy & have a lark! Those girls are the comfort of my life that's a fact—that affair I once talked to you about was all nonsense. The young man was in London the other day, I asked him to dinner,—& first told Minny who laughed & then told Anny who laughed too —their romantic old Granny was the founder of the story—Do you laugh & think I am humbugged? No—if there had been anything in it, I am sure my girl w^d have told me. Little Amy Crowe lives with us still and is so good and

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gentle that actually nobody in my family is jealous of her. . . . Mr. Charles Pearman has not resumed his livery on his return to his native country but dresses in black and is much greater man. The Ticknors are here, its very hard that I cannot make a feast for them—but the Dr. wont let me, & I save in dinners what I pay in fees. Indeed our little house is very pretty. I dont see a gayer one anywhere and if a man is to be ill why there cant be a pleasanter room than this in wh I'm writing, quiet, bright, with a beautiful garden and green avenue before it, such as W. B. Astor could n't have in New York, with all his money. And these are my news, Madam. I hope you liked the teapottykin &c. they were so nice to my mind that I thought there was no use in going farther for them than Broadway. I send my very best regards to your husband, and my love to my dear kind friends yonder—Whilst I am writing, the girls come in, and I say "whom do you think I am writing to?" Miss Min tosses up her head & says "to Sally Bax—" Good bye my dear S. S. H. says

Yours afft'ly always W. M. T.

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XLI

36 Onslow Sq., Brompton
2 November, 1856

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: I must try and write you a little letter from my bed on my back where I am lying with one of my old attacks of spasms. (O—O—Oho! he shuts his eyes and groans during an interval) I must be well tomorrow. Have n't I to go 400 miles to lecture at Edinburgh?—and with a grim face I congratulate you my dear Grandpapa and Grandmamma upon the happy event wh you announce to me. . . . May the little man prosper! may his little successors be happy and many! may he never inflict nor suffer murder in a Georgian Railway Car: may the fashion of applauding the bludgeoners of unoffending Senators not be continued in his time! (Aha! quite a little twinge!)

I dont know what to tell you about my where and whatabouts for 3 months past. They have been very unsatisfactory. At first we went to Spa in Belgium which was very satisfactory and if I did not write any of my book I thought a

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great deal of it. Then in evil hour I went to Aix-la-Chapelle and fell ill as at the present, then to Düsseldorf on the Rhine where hearing of the death of my mother's sister-in-law at Paris (another Mrs. Carmichael Smyth) and concluding that my dear old mother would naturally come to comfort the widower & afflicted we hastened to Paris. But no mother. Her presence was not wanted, the old Major liked the place where he was and stayed 3 weeks longer—So we had to stay those 3 weeks, and 2 weeks more with the old folks when they did come back. Then we came to London to prepare for our Scotch tour —we were to go to delightful country-houses— little Miss Min was to come out for the nonce —and made her first appearance at Russell Sturgis's in a nice white frock and a nice little two-penny diamond cross that a certain Papa bought —when lo! comes Charles Pearman from London with a telegraphic message from Paris "Your mother is ill. Come." Away we go, 4 of us, next morning—We find her—not very ill but the old man in a prodigious alarm & her too—we have one homœopathic doctor after another, one

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servant after another to sleep by her—at last in a fright she sends the homœopathists to the rightabout, gets rapidly well under the Regulars, but the girls pleasant party to Scotland is broken up & they must stay at Paris and nurse their invalid. I come away & fall ill here too—And I think this is an account of a blundering, unsatisfactory, uncomfortable campaign. Stop it 's not over yet—In my absence all my proof sheets and all your brother Oliver's circulars are whisked away & burned. I cant help it. Theres no use scolding. He must send me some more which I shall get on my return from Scotland please God—and then I must go back to the old folks in Paris for he wont come here and they are not fit to be left to themselves. In all these botherations the girls are behaving like trumps —take their disappointment with the sweetest good humour—and we try to do our best for keeping the commandment wh promises us that our days shall be long in the land.

Is n't this a cross grained dismal odious letter? Not a word of that book is written though I have spent hours & weeks of pains on it—never mind.

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There is time enough & to spare. As Mahomet wont move, the mountain must go to him. I must shut my house up—and stay for some months at Paris at any rate and, to this end, have refused a score of engagements to lecture. Well, I hope I shall never write you a spasmodic letter again! and O Massy! I hope I shall be well for Tuesday 4th! Salute your little grandchild for me, and his aunt and uncles and his papa & mamma & his grand aunts & uncles and everything that is yours among which please to count always

Madam, your faithful but uncomfortable at present

W. M. T.

XLII

Bradford, Manchester, Decr 10–12, 1856

I REMEMBER how near a certain anniversary is and must wish you many happy anniversaries. The letter which you wrote to me just before the birth of your boy was such a damp one that I did n't care to reply to it. . . . That was before the birth of the boy. Let us hope life has other interests and quite a new charm for you.

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What have I been doing since October? (when I returned home and found your letter & your mother's)—have scarcely been at home since that time, kept in perpetual motion by the illness of my dear old mother and the botherations attendant on it—and since November never quiet with the lectures—wh are a much greater success here than in America—as great even pecuniarily. People knowing the subject better, more familiar with the allusions, &c, like the stuff—I am glad for my part that this should be the opinion—for I know in America it was thought I had brought them an inferior article—glass beads as it were for the natives. But no newspaper in this country will say like Bennett that any young man would sit down in their office and write such lectures in an evening—I 'm obliged to skip over because I 've no blotting paper—and I such numbers of letters daily to write—90 a week at the very least—that 's why I have returned to the old slanting hand in place of the familiar upright—slanting is much quicker.

My mother has been very unwell and even more frightened than hurt. Hence my dear girls

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who were just ready to start to the North with me, were obliged to forego their pleasure, & stay with her & nurse her their best—(we were telegraphed over out of a pleasant party at Russell Sturgis's who has a palace of a house near London.) and we were to have gone to a half dozen fine houses and Miss Min rather prematurely to have made her entreé into this wicked world, but things have been otherwise ruled. There is my history for months past. My spirits are very much better—though I get those fierce attacks of illness still—am just out of bed from one of them wh prevented my lecturing last night & to-night. Think that at the end of next year if I work I shall be worth 20,000£!—Its as much as I want—10,000 apiece for the girls is enough for any author's daughters—and then when I am independent what shall we do? Hush—perhaps have a try at politics for which I dont care now—but one must do something and when you begin to play you get interested in the game—I have taken share in the Transatlantic Telegraph—I felt glad somehow to contribute to a thread that shall tie our two countries to-

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gether—for though I don't love America I love Americans with all my heart—and I dare say you know what family taught me to love them.

What a hideous place this is I am staying at —what kind people everywhere! What a beautiful woman came to see me to-day with her husband! The faithful evidently multiply—and —I find as usual that I dont care one single phigg. Praise does not produce the leaſt elation, censure a little captiousness but that 's all. At Edinburgh I was hissed about Mary Queen of Scots—and rather amused—I was not familiar with the Scotch, as I could not be except in certain families with you—as soon as I got back to England began to sympathize with my company again, and passed all laſt week at Hull amongſt traders in a very hearty, homely, comfortable society. A Jew there on Sunday gave me such a quantity of Port wine that though I did not like it and knew the end of it I drank and am ill in consequence. Wonderful consequence of Port wine! I could not help telling the son of the house that one of the gueſts, a Jew too, was an infernal Snob, in which the lad

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agreed, and wh was utterly true but why say it?

. . . And here there came in strangers and then more strangers and then a friend to dinner and then bed time and then early morning to Lpool, and dinner, lecture, supper there and now it is 12 December—She is receiving company in the brown house in diamonds & lace and what a fine supper there is in the dining-room and what flowers on the stairs and what a smart new dress mamma has got on, and how pale poor Lucy looks as she peeps out of her room and just goes back to chill & fever! Well, well, all this was a year ago—but did n't I think of it this morning as I lay awake and heard the wind roaring in the same house from which I embarked for America both times! Good bye my dear—God bless you—I 've only time and spirits to say that Have n't I written 10 letters already—and aint I unwell still and is n't there the lecture to do to-night—and O it will be pleasant to see the girls next week! Mamma may read this first & send it on Think of the Cunarder having to put back! I 've took 1,000£ share in the telegraph line; we 'll hold each

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other by the hand then. Good bye again my dear Sarah & God speed you & your husband & child.

XLIII

36 Onslow Square
November 1, 1857

But begun yesterday at the Athenæum where I found your letter.

THESE are pretty reproaches indeed Ladies! I should like to know who wrote last to both of you? I flatter myself its I who am the injured party—though that it may be months ago since I wrote I confess. And I have been thinking of you all the time of this panic and actually was too frightened to write. Last Monday I came home to the girls and announced that the carriage and one must be sold (we keep a carriage and one, a very pretty open carriage and a brougham if you please) that Jeames must certainly go, if not Chawls too (Mr. Chawls is such a great man now that he cant do without a young man in livery to help him) that all the American savings were gone to smash, includ-

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ing the 500£ from Harper Brothers for the Virginians. It is astonishing how well we took our ruin. Next day however things began to brighten again; and it appears we are not done for, as yet at least. What shall I tell? I have just come back from Oxford after that little electioneering freak. I should have won but for the Sabbath question, and on that point wont truckle or change to get any possible promotion or glory —and am quite as well out of Parliament as in. Tell Sally my fits of blue devils continue—that I have fallen in love with nobody else and intend to dont—that nobody is come after my girl who is the delight of her father when he sees her. I have had the parents with me for the last 3 months: or with the girls, rather, my visits being only occasional. I dont think the Virginians is good yet, though it has taken me immense deal of trouble, but I know it will be good at the end. I tremble for the poor publishers who gave me 300£ a number —I dont think they can afford it and shall have the melancholy duty of disgorging. Sure I think this is all my news. But I think about America a many and many times and in so

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friendly a manner that I am perfectly certain I shall be walking Broadway again ere long. Do write and tell me that you are not severely hurt in the panic. I took a share in the Transatlantic Telegraph, deeming it a sort of duty, but that Oxford election cost me so much that I was obliged to sell the Transatlantic share, so that that money was so much saved. Only 2 people of all those I canvassed had ever heard of my name. It would n't be so in America, would it? It was a good lesson to my vanity.

My summer trip was confined to a house at Brighton and a little excursion to Homburg & Paris. The girls rode hack horses and bathed and were happy. My mother who has been ailing for more than a year has improved very much during her 3 months visit to us. I am rather better in health, I think, but becoming more silent and selfish every day. Women know how to dissemble when they are bored, and appear cheerful though they are yawning in spirit. I wish I could be a little more of a hypocrite sometimes. . . . Ha! There is a large tear which my pen has shed. It is one of a box of pens which

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I bought in Washington, D. C. What about the boys? Is Wyllie working hard and as good as ever? Has George begun to grow a moustache? Is that tiresome fever and ague out of the house? I have not had a touch since the 4 of July when I was sitting quite happy and unprepared, after a good dinner, listening to Lord Brougham and Lord Lyndhurst telling wicked old stories, and lo! I felt the enemy creeping down my back. Mysterious chill and fever!—Prattling which nonsense my paper has come to an end. Was it a grand marriage of Miss Libbie? Mind, I consider it is my privilege to send each of those young ladies a tea-pot. The girls and I will go into town to-day to look for one: and when Madam J—— uses it she will please remember her and your

1857

HERE is the 28 November and the letter begun on the 1st still lying in my box. Do you know why it was not sent?—First we went out to look for a T pot—then we could n't find a pretty little one such as befits a young bride who wishes to console herself with Bohea in the absence of her

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heart's darling. Then when in about a week I had got scent of a pretty little old teapot it is a fact I had NO MONEY—that is to spare—That is times are so bad and every man so hard pressed that 1, 2, 3, 4 up to 14 people have been to me for gold and silver in the course of the month, and I could n't refuse them in their distress and did n't dare to buy even a twopenny halfpenny present whilst all these unfortunates were calling on for help. As I came in just now Charles says "Mr. C's servant just called with a note which he was to leave in case you were at home." Do you suppose I don't know what that means? Mr. C. will call himself to-morrow morning before 11 (the wretch!) and say My dear fellow the times are so bad that if you can lend me &c and how on airth with all this can I go and get that teapot? Never mind. Wait a while, Libbie, it must and SHALL be bought. Meanwhile take the benediction of your affectionate uncle—which is I think my relationship to you. What has happened since the 1st? Nothing particular. My good old parents are gone away after a good long visit—The old Major grows to be more

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and more like Colonel Newcome every day. My mother's health has greatly improved. She enjoyed her visit here. We are very smart. You should see our new Brougham if you please, &c &c &c. God bless you all—a very merry Xmas to you, to brides, to bridegrooms, to spinsters, piccaninnies, grandmothers, grandfathers, grand and common uncles, and to S S H from yours ever.

XLIV

April 10, 23, 1858
36 Onslow Square

MY DEAR MRS. BAXTER: Is n't it a horrible thing that Libbie's teapot is still in the cupboard yonder under Washington's bust? Is it a year since she was married? A set of weeks become a month and a set of months a year before I know where I am now, and every day of the year has its turmoil, trouble, illness, parties, letters, printer's-devils, duns, botherations, and so we go on and on until the end of troubles and pleasures—Do you know here 's the 10th of the month and only 3 pages of my number done?

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I have had 2 attacks within the last fortnight of my enemy; each attack throwing me back a week or so. I have been with the girls to a deal of parties and dinners. . . . But to return to Libbie's teapot, Captain Comstock wrote to me some time ago that he was coming to London and would take it with him, I not liking to trust the precious article to the common carriage or possible miscarriage of a steamer. Hence the delay in the transmission of this domestic little article. Have I ever written to you before on this horribly ugly paper? I find it pleasanter far to the pen than your beautiful cream-laids and gilt edges.

23. And here the letter again stopped 12 days ago; and, on Friday night after awful trouble, I only got my number done, just in time to send it by post to Liverpool and America. The book's clever but stupid, thats the fact. I hate story-making incidents, surprises, love-making, &c more and more every day; and here is a third of a great story done equal to two thirds of an ordinary novel—and nothing actually has happened, except that a young gentleman has come

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from America to England. I wish an elderly one could do t' other thing, and have the strongeſt wish to come and see you all. Are there any more Hamptonkins come or coming? What have we been about these 10 days? tramping the round of parties, giving dinners, and eating brandy peaches from New York—quite plain dinners, not oſtentatious, but O dear me how much pleasanter the men's parties are than those with ladies, that 's the faſt.—Tomorrow Miss Anny gives her firſt drum. I have set my face hitherto againſt these entertainments from the peculiar nature of our society—we know great people and small, polite and otherwise; the otherwise are not a bit comfortable in company of the others but yet angry if they are not asked. I know this horrible teafight will bring down all sorts of odium upon the givers; but they will have it, and though I 'm not quite such a soft Papa as G. B. of 2nd Avenue, if my young women set their hearts on anything they are pretty sure to get it. I am afraid the 2 Lambert girls in the Virginians are very like them, but of course deny it if anybody accuses me.

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We have been in the midſt of immense political fluſter. I have seen my name as a candidate for no less than 4 places in event of a dissolution of parliament, but don't want one now for a while. Let us have some more leĉtures and some more money firſt. My expenses (have I ever grumbled to you about them?) are awful. I have a one horse chay and spend 2600£ a year *at least*. Two families each with a carriage could live for that money—but then they don't give away 500£ as Somebody somehow does. Also at the end of the month when the number is done, I go and buy pooty things—6 such byootiful spoons as I brought home yeſterday! And what do you think? I have had a new coat the firſt in four years. I have a famous little horse to ride and get on him once a fortnight. I have good daughters, good wine in the cellar, easy work, plenty of money in my pocket, a fair reputation —I ought to be happy ought n't I? Eh bien! I don't think I am above 4 days in the month. A man without a woman is a lonely wretch. Hark at the bells dingdonging for church! Shall I go? No I forgot—Mr. & Mrs. Blackwood, Mr. and

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Mrs. Pollen (O Sally Hampton such a pretty woman!) 4 selves, Lord John Hay, Sir Charles Taylor, Mr. Bidwell, Mr. Motley (of U. S. A.) Mr. Creyke, and Mr. Edwards are coming to dinner at 7. A Frenchman is my butler and valet, in the place of the seductive Charles. . . . Here have I been chattering till it is time for dinner! My dear kind old friend—once and again it is a pleasure to come and sit down and talk to you. Give my best regards to all, and God bless you —Perhaps you 'll let S. S. H. have this and my dooty to her. You see I don't like to stop but keep chattering on till I 'm in the hall, down the steps and actually out of doors—Good bye

W. M. T.

XLV

36 Onslow Sq. August 25, 1858

I WONDER whether I shall have the energy to get through this sheet—this sheet? this page. But try we wool, though I owe ever so many people letters before you Madam, and this is safe to be dreadfully stupid. Dont you see that I cant even spell? I am constantly unwell now

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—a fit of spasms—then get well in about 5 days; then 5 days grumbling and thinking of my work; then 14 days work and spasms da capo —and what a horribly stupid story I am writing! Dont tell me. I know better than any of you. No incident, no character, no go left in this dreary old expiring carcass. There Miss Sally —you howl on your sea-shore and I will roar from mine. Come let us placidly take leave of our friends (not telling them anything I mean) go each to the top of a rock, and jump over and end our troubleoubleoubles in the midst of the sad sea waves' bubbleubblubbles—I am serious —you fancy I am joking. I tell you I am done, and I don't care. My dear it is all liver. We have been away on a (for the girls) jolly little Swiss tourken of 5 weeks and I find the kind letters among the heap on my return home. As for my dear Mrs. Baxter, it steps silently into the room, and soothes me like a sweet refreshing calming anodyne. Fact is I 'm quite beat and unwell and can scarce see the paper on wh I write.

Is Libbie's teapot ever going? Yes Andrew Arcedubus Esq. . . . will take it over in a few

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days. It has got black and is so small and shabby that I am ashamed to send it. But O my dear Libbie—times are dark and will be dark, so dark that no man shall be able to work. Make haste and get married Lucy my dear, if you want a siliwyer tea pot or you will have none from your unfortunate W. M. T. My dear kind mother heart, I am so glad it is elated at Wylly's getting such honours. When he comes to England he will talk to 2 orphans in a shabby genteel house about their maniac father. Nobody in the least is coming to marry them—and nobody I am sure is wanted, by their selfish parent. . . .

I have nothing to tell you as usual. I went away having got into trouble with a young fellow who told lies of me in a newspaper, which I was obliged to notice as we are acquaintances, and meet together at a little club. You have read something about it in the papers, I daresay. The little papers are still going on abusing me about it I hear—and dont care as I never read one. The public does not care about the story nor about the Virginians, nor I about either—nor do

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I know what there is in these 3 pages, nor whether I shall send them. Yes I think I shall send them because I can pay the post you know, and because once and away I like to growl out that I love you, ever so many of you, very sincerely. I think taraxacum might do something for Sally who is still (comparatively) young. If I wanted to see the children I would say so; but I dont. I suppose for form's sake I must send my love to them though. There, Bless you bless you my little dears. Take em away Nurse. Wowwowwow Rawwawwaw. Chickaly chickaly chickaly. O zoo pooty little darlings—O you unfeeling Broo-oo-oot! says Aunt Lucy walking out of the room quite haughty. Well—he is really unwell, that is the fact Grandmamma says. I think I'm ever so little better now I am got to the end of this absurd paper. God bless you all. Papa and the boys and the girls and Uncle Oliver, says

Your aff^{t}

W. M. T.

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XLVI

36 Onslow Square, Brompton
Christmas, 1860

THE autumn has passed away in which you were to have come to England and here is a bitter cold Christmas day and no news of you. I am unwell. I am hard at work trying to get the new story on a head. I have been quill-driving all the morning, but I must say a word of God bless you to my dear kind friends at Brown House Street and wish you a Christmas as merry as may be. Aren't you in a fright at the separation? Is Sally going to be a country-woman of yours no longer, and will her children in arms fight Libby's? It's a horrible thing to me to read of. Have you ever seen a coloured print called the Belle of the West I have it hanging up because it is like a young woman whom I used to admire very much. (perhaps other little partialities are hung up too and are now only so many painted memorials on a wall) Is it this horrid Separation that has prevented your all coming to Europe. Or are you waiting till next

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year when my fine new house will be built—at Palace Green, Kensington—opposite the old palace. If I live, please God, I shall write the history of Queen Anne there. My dear relations are furious at my arrogance, extravagance & presumption in building a handsome new house, and one of them who never made a joke in his life said yesterday to me "You ought to call it Vanity Fair."

I wonder whom you have got at dinner today? Our house is all hollyfied from bottom to top. We have asked a poor widow from India with her *five* children, and two or 3 men friends, and we have got a delicate feast consisting of

Boiled Turkey,
Roast Goose
Roast Beef.

and I am going to make a great bowl of punch in the grand silver bowl you know—the testimonial bowl.

No one has come to marry either of my dear girls. I am surprised they don't. But I hardly know any men under fifty, and cant be on the look out for eligible bachelors as good dear Lon-

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don mammas can. I have not made their fortunes as yet, but am getting towards it and have saved a little since I wrote last; but I am free-handed, have to keep my wife, to help my parents, & to give to poor literary folks—in fine my expenses are very large. I am supposed to make 10,000£ a year. Write 5 and it is about the mark. Health very soso. Repeated attacks of illness. Great thankfulness to God Almighty for good means, for good children. And thats all. Hadn't I better go on with Philip? Here is the very last sentence I wrote:

"When I was a girl I used always to be reading novels, she said but la! they're mostly nonsense! There's Mr. Pendennis, I wonder how a married man can go on writing about love and all that stuff!" And indeed it is rather absurd for elderly fingers to be still twanging Don Cupid's toy bow & arrows. Yesterday is gone, yes —but very well remembered. And we think of it the more now we know that To-morrow is not going to bring us much.

Goodbye my dear Yesterdays. And believe me affectionately yours

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XLVII

24 *May*. 36 *Onslow Sq*. 1861

I THINK you hardly know me in this handwriting I return to it by fits and starts and when I write with quill pens. Your little package of photographs came and touched us all. How I should like to see the originals, and the one who *is n't* represented, Madam. Why is there not one of you? I suppose Papa did not care to have his wife shown with a wrinkle in her face, and always thinks of her as that young lady in white muslin and a frill, who to my mind is not half so good looking as the Mrs. Baxter I knew. How the boys have grown! Wylly's moustache is quite elegant. I daresay George has one by this time on his solemn face. Do you know, but this I should not like to tell her, I think Sarah has grown handsomer; and we are divided here about which of the children we like best—the dark little maiden with the round eyes or the little man with the Saxon face. There's a very fine, kind, melancholy letter from Sarah Hampton which I have been reading. It is stretching

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a hand out into the paſt and shaking hands with a ghoſt there. I suppose you wont have the courage to leave home now that it is made so comfortable to you by war. If Wylly does n't come till December or so we shall moſt likely be able to house him in Vanity Fair House. If he comes sooner we muſt get him a lodging round the corner. At the paſtry cook's you know, there are very decent rooms; and it 's not farther off than the brown house from the Clarendon. That wretch W. H. Russell! On the night before he left London we dined at the Garrick Club; and what did I do but cut off a beautiful lock of snowy hair and write in an envelope Be kind to the bearer of this. And he never bore it to you; though he went to the Clarendon. And I dont at all envy him the errand upon which he is gone to the States.

Awful Reprisals. Thackeray inveſted the money which he received for his leƈtures in America, in American railway stocks. If they cease to pay dividends, he threatens to come back to America, and give more leƈtures.

I wonder shall I go and call upon your Min-

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ister? I have well nigh broken with the world, the grand world, and only go to the people who make my daughters welcome. The fine ladies won't; or is it that the girls are haughty, and very difficult to please? They won't submit to be patronized by the grandees at all, that's the fact; and I think I rather like them for being rebellious and independent—more so than their Papa, who is older and more worldly.

I think I kept back this notekin in order to sketch the new house at Kensington—but fond memory supplies the place of actual survey; and this is what you will see when you come to London—the reddest house in all the town. I have already had 1000£ offered me for my bargain: but I want if I can afford health & time to write the life of Queen Anne in that room with the arched window wh has a jolly look out on noble Kensington Garden Elms, and is no farther from the centre than what? than 25th Street let us say. But the house is very dear It costs 6000£ and 100£ a year ground rent. Where we are now only costs 3000. But its a famous situation & will be a little competency to the girl who inherits

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it. Anny has been ailing of late, and has gone to the country for change of air.

I think Trollope is much more popular with the CornHill Magazine readers than I am: and doubt whether I am not going down hill considerably in public favor. It does n't concern me very much Were I to let yonder red house we could live almost without writing but then you know wife and parents are expensive. They want more money here than at Paris; and, thank God, up to the present there 's no lack. But my mother gets very rebellious and wants to go back. There 's a little clique of old ladies there who are very fond of her and with whom she is a much more important personage than she is in this great city. If anything happens to the Major she will go to Paris and give us the slip and grumble when she is there and presently come back.

Well, this is not much to tell is it? To write twopenny news of domestic gossip to people enjoying a revolution. I have never got to believe in it as serious as yet; and my impression of the U. S. is so incurably friendly that I can't fancy you quarrelling and hating each other. I cant think the

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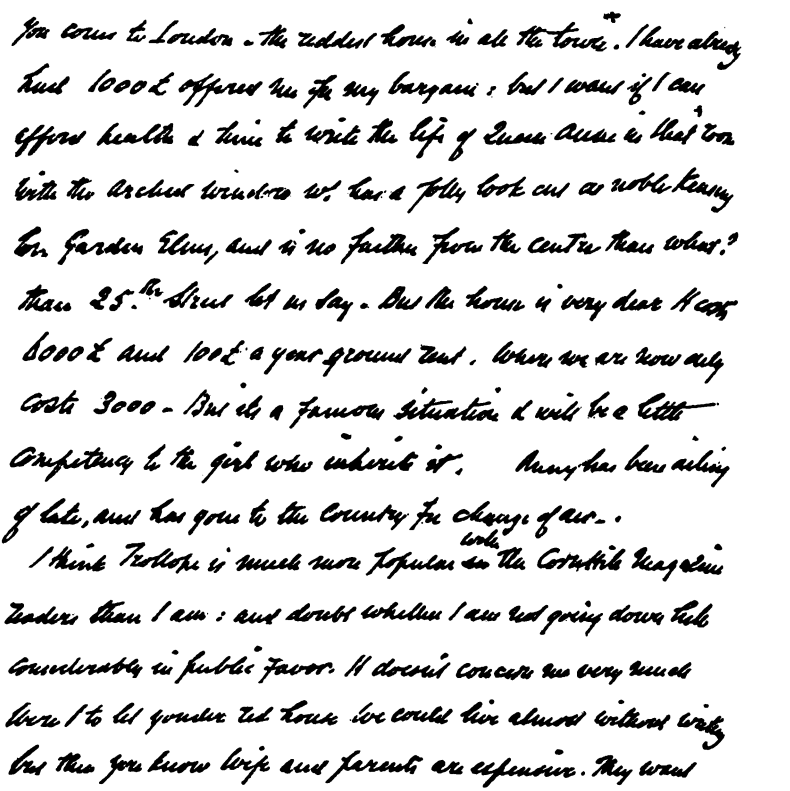
FACSIMILE OF A PORTION OF THACKERAY'S LETTER OF MAY 24, 1861



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fight will be a serious fight. In what will it benefit the North to be recoupled to the South? In the old wars we used to talk of the ruin of England as ensuing on the separation of the colonies—and are n't both better for the separation?

Come let me shut up this little twaddling letterkin, and pay a shilling for it which is 11½ more than its worth, and send it with a handshake to dear friends from their faithful

W. M. T.

XLVIII

1862

Palace Green
Kensington, W.
Friday, May 9

MY DEAR FRIENDS. I am glad to have a word of news of all of you, and that you should have wished to hear of me. I did n't write though I have thought of you many a time; and feared for you, lest the war should have brought its calamity down upon you. Before that grief which I know must be in your house; what to say or to do? I know what your feelings are;

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loyal Northerners though you may be, with the daughter and grandchildren in the South who look at me out of our photograph book so innocent and pretty and then there 's the bread winner—the warehouse—does the warehouse bring any rent now? I know and feel that trying times are come on you all.

Some one called me away the other day when I wrote those last words and then I have been ill for 2 days and I was called away just as I was going to say something. Now tell me my dear kind good Baxter and wife—there may be troubles at home—no dividends—the deuce to pay. I know a fellow who is not rich, for he has spent all his money in building this fine house; all but a very little—but who knows? Draw on me for 500£ at 3 months after date; and I am your man. You wont be angry? You may be worth millions; and laugh at my impudence—I dont know, but I dont mean no harm. Only I remember and shall all my life the kindness and hospitality of the dear old brown house.

This one is delightful. I have paid 5000£ on it in 2 years out of income—but there 's ever so

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much more to pay I dont know how much. When done however it will be a little income to the girl who inherits it and do you know I dont much care when she does. I am constantly ill. A Doctor told me at Paris t' other day that I had a fatal complaint and I was n't very sorry.* It turns out not to be true—but, but, but . . . Well upon my word it is one of the nicest houses I have ever seen—as good as Mr. Haight's let us say—there is an old green and an old palace and magnificent trees before the window at wh I write. I have the most delightful study, bedroom, and so forth; can get 10£ for as much writing as there is on these 4 little sides; have a strong idea that in the next world I shan't be a bit better off. Well—Since her husband's death my poor old mother is wandering about, happy nowhere. I inherit from her this despondency I suppose—but have the pull over her of a strong sense of

* *This recalls an anecdote in the Roundabout Paper "On Lett's Diary," which appeared in the Cornhill Magazine for January, 1862, and subsequently in the édition de luxe and other editions of Thackeray's works, with an illustration by Charles Keene, entitled "The Sentence."*

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humour wh gets plenty of cheerful laughs out of your glum old friend. Nobody comes to marry the daughters. Every body is fond of them. I think they have been the happier for my having gone to America, where a good father and mother I know of used to tell me they liked their children to have "a good time."

I saw the Bigelows at Paris last week—she as jolly as ever. Good bye God bless you. Never mind if I dont write I may be lazy or moody but always affectionately yours

W. M. T.

Palace Green
Kensington, W.
Christmas Day, 1862

MY DEAR FRIENDS. The sad letter has been here for many days. I had the news before from Mr. John Dillon, who has friends in the South. I have not had the courage to write to you about it. I know there is no consolation. I lost a child myself once, that 's enough to say that I understand your grief. That journey of Lucy

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and her father is the saddeſt thing I have read of for many a long day. I look at Sarah's face in the photograph book and then at a print wh I have had for many years because it was like her when I firſt saw her. My friend Miss Perry was telling me how she had juſt read an old letter of mine to her dear ſiſter (who is dead too, and who was one of the deareſt friends I ever had) and how there was a description of this New York girl. What a bright creature! What a laugh, a life, a happiness! And it is all gone; and you dear people sit bewailing your darling. The letters she sent to me at rare times were awfully sad. In that photograph how sad she looks! As for those little children, those two we know—we three in this house love them both. Ever since they came to us they have been in the girls' sitting room, and the Belle of the Weſt is yonder in mine. How well I remember that firſt look of her, with the red ribbon in her hair! and next is that sad matron, and next your letter. What a warm welcome, what a kindly fireside, what kind faces round it—and hers the brighteſt of all! Amen. Dear mourning father, mother,

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sister we can only shake you by the hand, and pray God comfort you. . . . I have been thinking in this pause of that hospitable table in your dining room, and the Spirits moving about; and looking up wistfully in this big lone room, lest a form should make itself visible.

This morning I was lying awake in the grey looking out at the elms, and thinking of your dear Sarah. God be with us. I dont feel much care about dying. As we love our children, wont our Father love us? Dear friends I have been so happy in my home, and in yours that I can feel for the grief which now bears you down. God bless you all.

Yours affectionately always

W. M. THACKERAY

I DONT talk a word of politics to you. I was touched by Young saying kind words of me in his paper.

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LETTERS TO
Miss LIBBY STRONG

Following are three letters addressed by Thackeray to Miss Libby Strong, niece of Mr. Baxter, who was an inmate of the family at the Brown House during both the visits of the novelist to America, and who is referred to several times in the previous letters of this series as "Miss Libby."

These letters were all written in remembrance of the birthday of Miss Strong, which coincided with that of Thackeray. The second was addressed to both Miss Lucy Baxter and Miss Strong, and bears on the last page two L's to indicate this fact. Miss Strong is now Mrs. Alfred Leonard Curtis of New York.

L

Basle, 18 *July*, 1853

My dear Libby. Just to show that I don't forget my promise to write to you on this the 18th [17th] birthday you have known in this wicked world, I tear a leaf out of a book (for I have no desk with me up stairs,) and I write a God bless you and a many happy re-

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turns of the day to you and all others who were born on your day. We are set out on a little tour. It's ever so many weeks since I have heard from the Second Avenue and the laſt news I had of it was that a baker's shop had been burned and some people killed jumping out of window. We have come from Baden to day, where we spent 10 very jolly days, and I should have made you some verses: but, Miss, I was better employed spinning prose for my family, and getting on at a fine rate.

This is juſt like an American hotel, and I was showing my daughters a regular American table d'hôte (there were a score of you all at supper as we dined at a separate table) and juſt as I was saying how comfortable it was to see them all again: how I felt back in the auld country (your's you know is the auld country with me—) I'm sorry to say no less than 5 people—two of 'em ladies—put their knives down their throats, at wh those girls laughed. It was all very well of me to say 'My dears, theres no *crime* in using a knife as we use a fork or a spoon' but still I wish they had n't a done it, for I know the Eu-

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rōpians laugh at the practice and I don't want you to be laughed at. There were girls with hair

you know, & little Vandyke collars

Just as I remember them in a certain country: and my ♡ warmed towards them from certain recollections I have: but I wish, I wish they had not used their knives in that way. I see more Americans than English abroad: I see some of 'em turning round to each other, & whispering that's so and so—meaning some one who was born on Miss Libby Strong's birthday. Are you having a good time, & being all happy? I wish I could see you all this minute. How is B——? Is his name Tommy B—— or Billy or what? Are you gone to Newport or Saratoga? Is your father well, and Ben? Are your aunt uncle & cousins pretty cheerful? Will you kiss them with my respectful compliments, and accept the same (wh I will pay I hope next year) from your affectionate old friend

WMT.

See in what pretty ways I can write I shall be

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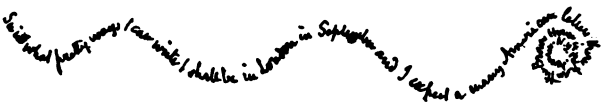
in London in September and I expect a many American letters there from the Brown House in 2d Avenue. N. Y.



FACSIMILE OF THE SCROLL-LIKE POSTSCRIPT

LI

Somewhere in October & November
Paris, 1853

MY DEAR LITTLE BIRDS. There is no use in getting out of temper and scolding and rating me in that way. I know very well that I owe you a letter: and that you are going about saying to everybody Why does n't Mr. Thackeray answer us? Were n't we very kind to him? Did n't we make him some brandy-peaches and pickled-walnuts (I just think how clever it would have been had I said pandy-breaches and wickled-palnuts ho ho ho! You will kill me with laughing if you go on in that way!) Did n't he kiss us both when he went away (*Now* you are

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caught! I have put this in just in order that you may n't show the letter. You dare n't now. I defy you). And we write to him the prettiest little letters, and we always think kindly of him, and he owes us a letter this ever so long!—O you little absurd birds! (I wish I could hear you pronounce them 2 wuerds absuerd buerds in your New York tone! You are sitting on one perch and I will knock you both down with one little stone.

I think I have told you all the news in the preceding page and you may rely upon every word I have said as correct. I was so glad to hear from Mamma—I mean Mother I mean Aunt Anna, that you were both married and living in great comfort in Fifty Sixth Street—I don't like Libbie's marrying a pastry Cook but que voulez vous? we have our prejudices in Europe: when my youngest girl was married to the black footman I was for a long time inconsolable but the little tawny graces of my infantile Grandson have reconciled me to his Mother's choice and the bandy legs and woolly head of his father. Do you know what all this is about?

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Well I will tell you. My daughters & I are going out to tea with their Granny. We went to dress together. I mean at the same time you know. I am in that elegant coat & waistcoat que vous savez—the very garments—and I thought I would begin a letter to you, and write a little stuff and nonsense until they were ready. Here they are. Away we go to tea. Good night Mesdemoiselles L. L.

We have been here for a fortnight. This is written the next morning you know—And I don't know whether we shall make out our visit to Rome this winter. It is always a hard matter to get a family on the march—the botheration of moving—the tears of Grandmother &c. I wish the girls would let me go by myself for a month, & they wd but they would n't forgive me afterwards. I don't know that Paris is very pleasant. I know 2, 3, 4 distinct sets of people, and between them all cant see any one comfortably. The best way is to do as at New York, go to nobody, only to one house, say a brown one at the corner of a Street, and neglect all the rest of the World. Did I tell you that I have bought

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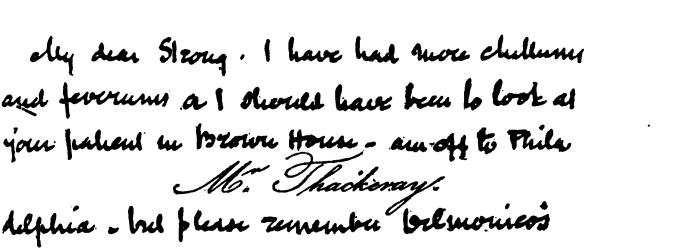
a pretty little house at Brompton? looking into a very pretty square (Onslow Sq:)—The girls are to keep a floor to themselves and a little bath-room. I know where I got the hint of the bath-room; and we shall give up old Kensington and go and live there. But the house is not so roomy as Kensington. I can only make out at the most 2 spare bed rooms. I got your Mother's letter yesterday; and I went right away


My dear Strong. I have had more chillums and feverums a I should have been to look at your patient in Brown House - am off to Philadelphia - but please remember Belmonico's Chambers St. at 6.

Mr. Thackeray.

FACSIMILE OF A NOTE TO MISS STRONG'S FATHER WRITTEN ON A VISITING-CARD

to see[k] her Mrs. Bayley but she is gone. Two nights ago at the theatre I saw the fat face of an old acquaintance from Providence R.I. C—— is n't his name? a podgy little dandy. I was glad to set eyes on him. People from your Country whom I knew there cant understand I daresay,

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how glad I am to see them. What makes me like it so?—The Brown House, and one or two more—but the B. H. most of all.

Yesterday (This is written weeks and weeks after the other part,) me and the gals, went to Fontainebleau; and the wind blows fair for Rome now I think. I shall be glad to be on the move again, so as to be quiet. Do you know that when we were in that pleasant forest yesterday, and walking through those trim old gardens all carpeted with red leaves and admiring that quaint old palace, I often wished for some young ladies? Corbin gave us a grand dinner last Saturday. He had a Lord on each side of him and the whole feast was very splendid: and Bancroft Davis has just arrived and I see your compatriots flaunting about every where in grand barouches with splendid livery-menials and cockaydsin their hats —& I wish I wish for you girls that 's the truth— No one has such good tea—Such good peaches —Such good walnuts—Why is n't Second Avenue next door that I might leave my books and papers and step in where I know I should be welcome if it was only to talk nonsense like this

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Good bye young ladies accept my respectful salutations Remember me to Aunt Snelling & to George & to Wyllie and so Good Bye

WMT.

LII

Chateau de Brecrecque
Boulogne Sur Mer [1854]

IS not this the 18 July and does not Miss Libby Strong expect a letter on this anniversary? Yes and Miss Lucy ought to have had a letter on her's; and will, I hope, be jealous at not getting one—but you see, Miss Lucy, this is my birthday as well, thats why I write so specially—though what do birthdays mark after 40? As in the railroad tunnels (unknown in your free country) we get deeper and deeper plunging into the dark and the bright spot we set out from grows fainter and fainter till it winks out inwisible. Libby is only just setting off on her life-journey. She isn't tired of the jolting nor the sameness nor the dust nor the hard seats. I wonder whether there are some nice young men in the carriage? that

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makes the journey pass much pleasanter; at leaſt, about five & twenty years ago when I was Miss Libby's age a pretty girl opposite always did my eyes good. Now its different of course. I was a very venerable old bird when I was in America, but I am fifty years older now at leaſt; think decidedly I'm not for this world very long—dont care much to stay, as soon as Anny & Minny are comfortably settled—Theres Minny hoeing in the garden at this present minute. Such a pretty quiet green smiling damp pleasant unwholesome garden! We have many of us had colds in the house. I have been to Paris for a week after working for a fortnight here like a Trojan: kept by myself all the time I was there called upon nobody bought clocks and gimcracks for the new house in London wh I never seem to want to see again went to the play every night and did not even call on Miss Davis of New York though we were ackshly living in the same hotel. Dont you see by this twaddle that I haven't got much news to give you? The most part of life is such—at forty three—at eighteen, Miss, it's different—and the eyes see things with a sunshine of their own sup-

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plying. Tell me, is there no plum-cake coming from the Brown House and no young fellow stepping forward?—The moſt awful thing about the brown house is—I'm almoſt ashamed to own it—that I've forgotten the number. The way in wh one forgets (at 430 wh is my age) is awful. A man came and spoke to me yeſterday at the pier here—Good Evns says he dont you remember me? No says I quite cheerfully not in the leaſt my good Sir. I forget the number of the house where I lived myself for 5 years before I went to Kensington—No stop—its 286. O thou fool, what will it matter a few score years hence?

I began to make a pome about Sontags death the other day but stopped finding it was not at all about her but about myself. Bon Dieu what an angel I remember thinking her juſt twenty five years ago and seven years before Miss Libby Strong was born! Something dismal must be in the air for inſtead of writing gaily to a young lady on her birthday see the page is full of darkness, death, weariness of soul, failing memory, advancing decrepitude, speedy departure. Is it because

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I have been hard at work all day, and am writing this for the dear life, so that Mr. Dickens may carry it in his pocket across the water, and so forward it to Liverpool. I dined with him yesterday. He has 9 children 7 boys—we played at forfeits and the game of 'buzz' Do you know it? I think even buzz would tire me after a certain number of enjoyments.

Come, it is time to pack up this note, and trot down to the boat. Suppose I was at New York now. I wonder whether it being your birth day, I should be allowed to—vous comprenez—and it being my birth day whether I shouldn't be authorized to do it all round: Well now I guess I'd give a hundred dollar bill to do it—thats thirty three$ 33 cents a piece I reckon and one cent over: Miss Libby says I dont know what you mean about cents but I know you are talking a great deal of noncents. So it is. And how much of life is ditto ditto? Wait till you are five and twenty years older like some people, and then see.

So I send my love to all of you in the brown house, or wheresumdever the Shade & the Sum-

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OTHELLO AND DESDEMONA

FROM A HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED DRAWING BY THACKERAY

SEE PAGE 193

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mer has conveyed you, and am of the 3 young ladies especially the

respectable old friend

W M T.

A FRIEND of mine is coming out to N. Y; to whom I shall give a letter. He is a queer fellow the original of the Chevalier Strong in Pendennis

NOTE

THE *circumstances under which this picture of Othello and Desdemona was made are thus related by Mrs. Curtis. During his first visit to America Mr. Thackeray once came to call at the Brown House, and finding that Mrs. Baxter was not at home, he left his cards without entering, it being his invariable custom not to visit the family during her absence. The young ladies from an upper window saw him as he was going away, and Miss Strong was dared by the others to wave her handkerchief at him, which she did, eliciting a courteous*

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response from their friend. The next day she received from Mr. Thackeray a box of handkerchiefs, with the preceding sketch and the following inscription:

This was to have gone with the Handkerchiefs
& another picture representing ♀ Sister Anne
waving her handkerchief out of window in the 2nd box
but the Ink runs when I try to colour them & spoils em

THE END

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